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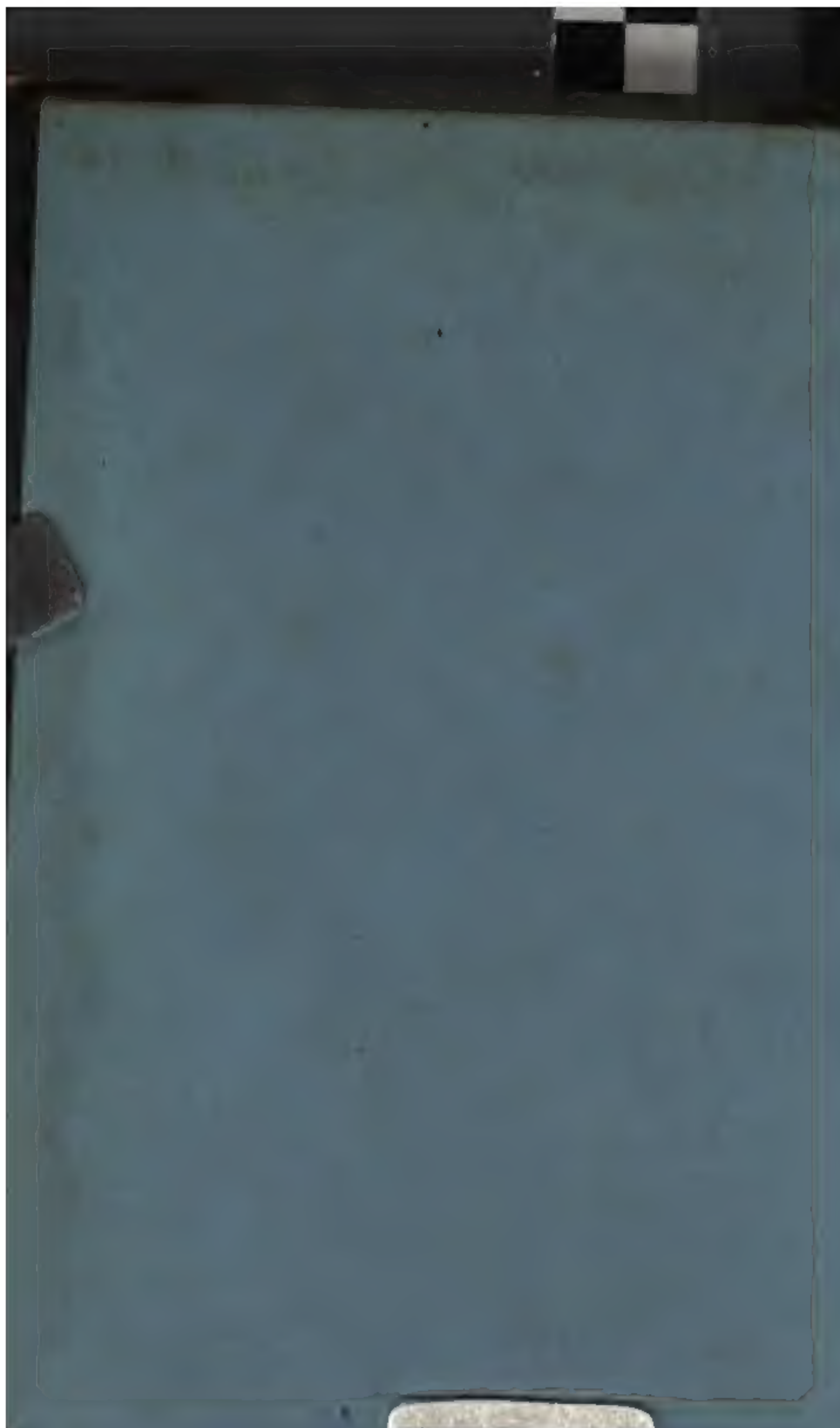
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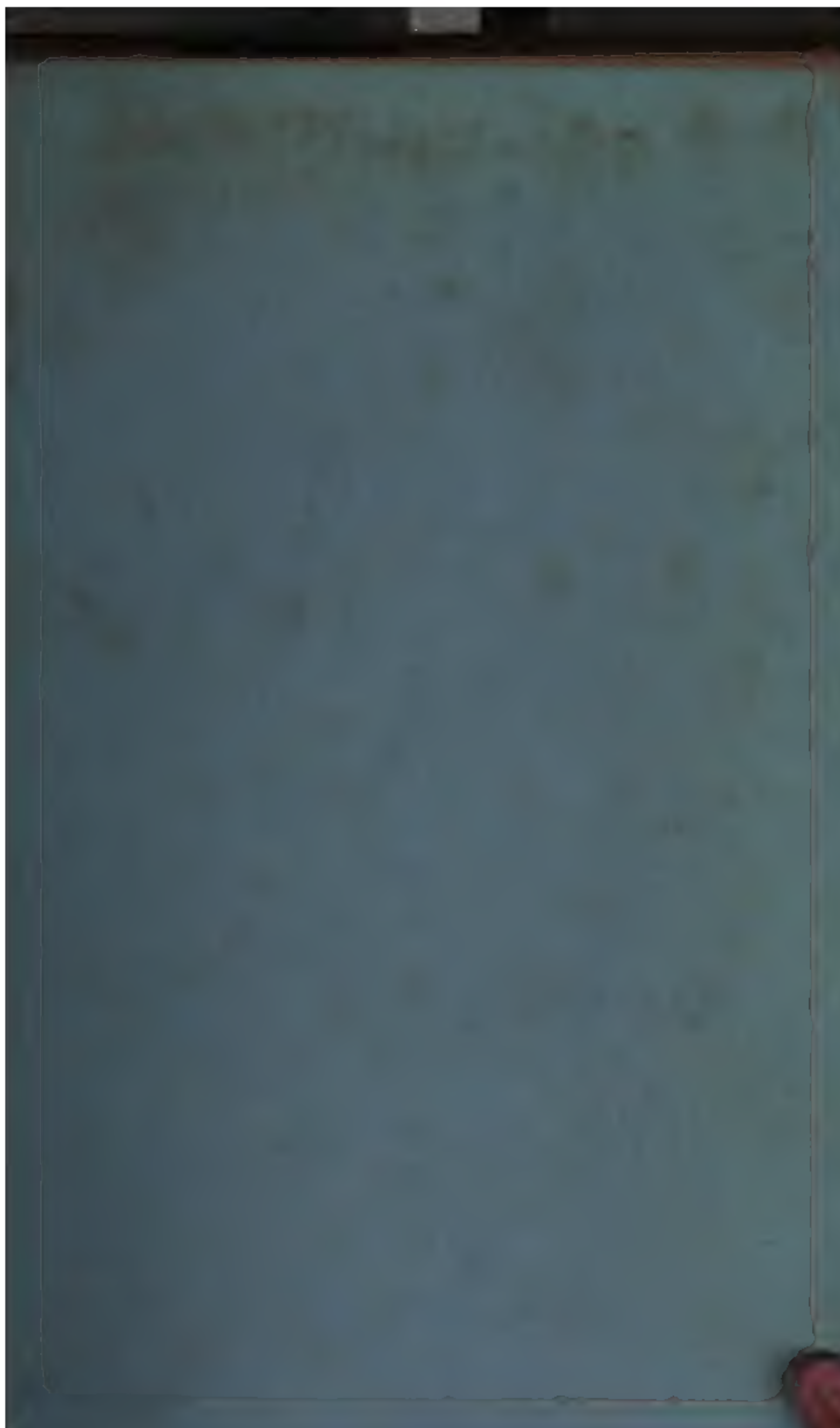
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*Louis Huard, del.*

Edmund Evans, sc.

THE PORTRAIT OVER MR. HARCROSS' FIREPLACE.







# BELGRAVIA

*A LONDON MAGAZINE*

CONDUCTED BY

M. E. BRADDON

AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' 'AURORA FLOYD,' ETC. ETC.

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# BELGRAVIA

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JULY 1872

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## TO THE BITTER END

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

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### CHAPTER XXI. 'AND ONE WITH ME I COULD NOT DREAM YOU.'

**M**R. and Mrs. Harcross lived in an intensely new house in an intensely new neighbourhood. There are people who have an instinctive love of ancient habitations, whose souls yearn for ivy-clad manor-houses and moated granges; who languish for the narrow windows and red-brick fronts of Queen Anne, and are thrilled with delight by the oriels and mullions of Elizabeth; people who would endure any inconvenience for the sake of knowing that the curled darlings of the Restoration had held their orgies in the dining-room, or that fair dames in hoop and wimple had made their bower in the best bedroom; people who would smile calmly while the water came through every ceiling, if the house was warranted to have been part of a favourite palace of Anna Boleyn's; and, O dear, how many favourite abiding-places Henry VIII., Anna Boleyn, and Elizabeth seem to have had, scattered over the face of the country!

Augusta Vallory was not one of these enthusiasts of antiquity. Her ideas, likings, and dislikings, were essentially modern. A house could not be too new for her. She liked to see the walls fresh from the trowel of the plasterer, to choose every yard of paper-hanging, to know that no inferior clay had ever been sheltered by the roof that was to cover her own superior head.

'I hardly like the idea of a house other people have lived in,' she said; 'especially if there are cupboards; they generally leave an odour!'



So when, prior to their marriage, Hubert Walgrave suggested one of the pleasant streets between Grosvenor-square and Park-lane—Upper Brook-street, or Green-street, for example—Miss Vallory shook her head peremptorily.

‘My dear Hubert, all those houses are as old as the hills,’ she exclaimed; ‘there would be beetles, and all kind of horrors.’

Mr. Walgrave ventured to hint that the class of people who lived in Upper Brook-street would hardly submit to beetles—in the drawing-rooms, or on the principal staircase, that is to say.

‘Putting beetles out of the question, Hubert, I know for a certainty that there are people in Upper Brook-street who let lodgings. It is quite impossible that you and I can live—what is that horrid expression? cheek by jowl?—cheek by jowl with a lodging-house. Now, in the new district on the Marquis of Westminster’s estate—’

Mr. Walgrave made a wry face.

‘I abominate new houses,’ he said.

‘That is to say, you abominate cleanliness and convenience. You might just as reasonably say one thing as the other. Near Grosvenor-place we can get a house fit for people of some position; a house in which I shall not be ashamed to receive my friends; and, of course, we must have our evenings, Hubert.’

‘Our evenings! Of course, my dear Augusta; I shall make a point of spending my evenings at home, if you wish it.’

‘I don’t mean that. I shall expect you to stay at home after dinner naturally, when we have no engagements; but I mean an evening a week for reception.’

‘O, a “Tuesday,” or a “Thursday,”’ said Mr. Walgrave, with another wry face. ‘Do you think that kind of thing pays, Augusta? To be obliged to stop at home on one particular evening, and have no end of candles burning, and to see a pack of people come straggling in, in an inane kind of way, with the air of performing a social duty and not expecting to get anything to eat—do you really think it pays? Isn’t it rather a treadmillish kind of entertainment?’

‘I don’t know why my friends should only “straggle” in,’ Miss Vallory said, with rather an offended air; ‘I trust they would come willingly.’

‘O, no doubt, as willingly as any one ever does come to that undecided sort of entertainment. Still, to my mind, it is always more or less treadmillish; and then there is the wear and tear of brain you go through all the week in trying to secure something a little out of the common—some pianist who lets off louder fireworks than the general run of pianists; some literary swell who has just published a successful book; or an astronomical swell who has discovered a new planet; or a legal swell who is leading counsel in the latest sensational trial; or a crack physician who has just got a

baronetcy; some one to stare at and whisper about. Seriously, Augusta, don't you think we might get off with three or four dinner-parties and a ball in the course of the season?'

'I hardly know what you mean by "getting off," Hubert. I like to see my friends, and I hope they like to see me.'

Mr. Walgrave shrugged his shoulders, with that accustomed air of polite indifference with which he was wont to end any dispute with his betrothed.

'My love, if you like to establish a hebdomadal treadmill in your drawing-room, I cannot possibly object,' he said lightly.

So the house in Mastodon-crescent was taken, on a seven years' lease; quite a small house for that region of mighty mansions. There were only nine bedrooms on the four upper floors, three bathrooms, and some little stunted passages, with narrow pinched grates squeezed into corners, which were *par excellence* dressing-rooms. On the ground-floor there was the regulation dining-room, with a gloomy den behind, which was to be the library and sulking-chamber of the master of the house. The first floor was absorbed by the drawing-rooms, which were as the Acropolis-square drawing-rooms, with a difference that was hardly perceptible to the indifferent eyes of Mr. Walgrave. There was the grand piano, the vast tract of velvet pile, dotted with serpentine-backed occasional chairs, dos-à-dos, vis-à-vis, coude-à-coude, and other species of the sofa tribe. There was an ottoman which was twin brother to the Acropolis-square ottoman; there were stands for portfolios of engravings and photographs—the minds of Miss Vallory's friends requiring to be sustained by engravings and photographs, as their bodies by coffee or ices.

Hubert Walgrave looked round the room with the merest casual glance when he came with his future wife to see what a fashionable upholsterer had done for the house which was to be his home during the next seven years. If it had been a question of lodging there a week, his gaze could have hardly been more listless.

'Are you satisfied, Hubert?' Miss Vallory asked, after she had given her own opinion about the carpet, and condemned a chair or two.

'My dear, I am supremely satisfied if you are pleased. There is such a family likeness in drawing-rooms, that one comes to lose a good deal of one's interest in them. At Sir Daniel Dundee's summer lodge at Richmond there is no drawing-room, only a vast library with a bay-window looking on to the Thames; and if I were gratifying my own fancy in a house, I would have no drawing-room. I would give the largest room the house contained to my books: a room to read in, to think in, to live in; and if it were my unlucky lot to have many visitors, I would receive them in a winter-garden.'

'I trust your fancy will be gratified in this house,' said Augusta.

‘and I do wish you would not speak of it in that cold way, as if it belonged to some one else.’

‘A London house has no individuality, at least not a modern London house. Let us make it what we may, we should find the same kind of thing next door. I daresay I might walk into any dining-room in this crescent, sit down, and make myself at home, and not discover my mistake till a strange footman came in with the coal-scuttle.’

They ascended to the second floor, and made a tour of the chief bedroom, Mrs. Harcross’s dressing-room, Mrs. Harcross’s boudoir, Mrs. Harcross’s bathroom; Mr. Harcross’s dressing- and bath-room—both in one—was on the floor above, and approached by the servants’ staircase, the principal staircase breaking short off at the second floor. Happily, Mr. Walgrave-Harcross was not a Sybarite, and made no objection to the secondary staircase.

‘I am sorry they were obliged to put you on the next story, Hubert,’ Augusta said apologetically; ‘but they could not contrive my rooms any other way. A boudoir is no use unless it is next one’s dressing-room. *En revanche*, I give you up the library altogether; I even told them to arrange the ventilation for smoking.’

‘That was very considerate. Yes; I shall be glad of a den in which I can smoke my cigar. I shall import some of my books from the Temple immediately I take possession.’

They wandered in and out of the rooms. The boudoir was the prettiest room in the house: all dainty fluted chintz rose-buds, butterflies, lilies-of-the-valley; a mantelpiece of gaily-coloured majolica, with timepiece and candelabra of the same bright ware; a cottage piano, low luxurious arm-chairs on each side of the fireplace, fern-cases and aquariums in the windows; tables and cabinets all bird’s-eye maple, inlaid with various coloured woods.

It was a cheerless rainy day, a day that made the brightest things look dull, and Mr. Walgrave grew strangely silent while his betrothed lingered in this gaily furnished chamber; it reminded him just a little of another room that had been gay with birds and flowers on a dark November day.

His betrothed was too much absorbed in the consideration of her rooms to perceive the sudden gloom upon his face. Miss Valory was in excellent spirits; the upholsterer had executed her orders admirably. She felt a pleasure in the expenditure of her own money, a pride in this house of her own furnishing, which she had never felt in the splendours of Acropolis-square; and she was really fond of the man she was going to marry; really anxious that his position should be improved by these handsome surroundings, that her fortune should assist him in his professional career. That indifference of Mr. Walgrave’s, which annoyed her somewhat at times, she took to be nothing more than manner, a merely conventional

listlessness, of no more real significance than the fashion of his clothes, which he wore because other men wore them. It had never entered into her mind to doubt the reality of his affection for her. What could any man desire more in a wife than she could give—beauty, education, accomplishments, and fortune?

Mr. Walgrave assumed the name of Harcross early in the summer, but the marriage did not take place until term was over—a very brilliant marriage at a fashionable West-end church. Mr. and Mrs. Harcross went to the Highlands for their honeymoon, and contemplated the beauties of that illustrious land in a cool leisurely way that was peculiar to both of them. In November they came back to town, and began housekeeping in Mastodon-crescent, Hubert Harcross falling into the routine of his wife's existence with a sufficiently graceful submission. She did not demand quite so much of him as many women might have demanded in her position. She had made up her mind to be a woman of fashion, now that she had slipped her moorings as it were, and sailed out into the open sea. As Miss Vallory she had been only a rich solicitor's daughter, always fettered more or less by the narrow views of her father. As Mrs. Harcross, with a handsome fortune, and a husband on the high-road to distinction, she felt her social position secure. The very best society, she told herself, would be open to her by and by, when her husband had made himself talked about. In the mean while she was content to be a person of importance in a somewhat lower circle, and to wait the hour when the doors of that higher paradise should be opened to her.

Thus the new life upon which Hubert Harcross entered was by no means a domestic life. It was rather a perpetual round of petty forms and ceremonies, which were almost as irksome to him as the routine of court life was to Madame de Maintenon, in those dreary years of her grandeur, when she languished, sick at heart, for one half hour of freedom. Mrs. Harcross liked to live 'in society,' which meant that all the best years of her life should be devoted to visiting, and receiving visitors. Her circle was always widening. People perpetually wanted to know her, and her weekly evening afforded an open field for the growth of new acquaintance. Hubert Harcross sickened of the simpering strange faces; the men who insisted in talking shop to him, and complimenting him on his admirable line of argument in this or that case; the amateur tenors and sopranos, who were always warbling by the grand piano; the last celebrity whom he was expected to worship. Man of the world as he was, he had his own notion of a home, which was something widely different—O, how widely!—from this splendid house in Mastodon-crescent, where the only room in which he felt himself his own master was that vault-like chamber looking on to a stony yard, and a high wall that shut out the sunshine. He submitted, however;

allowed his wife to give as many dinners as she pleased, content to add his modest list of guests to her longer roll; went with her to as many parties as she pleased, sat out all the new plays produced at fashionable theatres, wasted an hour or two at the opera every subscription night, put in an appearance at private views at all the West-end picture galleries; and when his professional engagements permitted, would even submit to be paraded amongst the azaleas or rhododendrons at South Kensington or the Botanical.

He was not sorry, however, when his work grew heavier, and forbade these concessions on his part, until little by little he contrived to drop away in a great measure from his wife's amusements, pleading the exigences of his profession. She would have liked much better to keep him by her side; but since she was bent upon his becoming a great man, she was fain to endure the loss of his society, and to go on her frivolous way, for the most part, without him, serene in the consciousness that she was the handsomest woman and the best-dressed woman in her circle; spending a thousand a year or so on her toilet and small personal requirements; and considering that she acquitted herself of all her duties to her God and her neighbour, when she put a sovereign in the plate handed round after a charity sermon, or subscribed five pounds to an orphanage or hospital.

The life was a barren life. They had been married more than two years, and no child had been born to them, to sanctify their union. No innocent baby face shone star-like amidst the commonplace splendours of their home. That mutual source of interest and pleasure, which might have drawn husband and wife nearer together, was wanting. With a strange inconsistency, Hubert Harcross, whose whole career had been based upon a purely selfish philosophy, took this childlessness to heart, bitterly disappointed, and thought of himself as he might have been with little children in his home, purified and elevated by that sacred trust.

He would rouse himself from gloomy brooding over this subject sometimes with a cynical laugh.

'Why should I languish for a son?' he would ask himself. 'What have I to bequeath to him? a name without association but such cheap renown as I may win for it, the blood of a selfish spendthrift, and a past which is something worse than a blank. And when my children grew up, would not their clear eyes perceive what their mother may be too blind to discover, our cold and loveless union? Better as it is, perhaps; better that I should go childless to the grave, than that I should live to see my children blush for me.'

Mr. Harcross had in nowise overrated the value of his marriage with William Vallory's daughter and Stephen Harcross's heiress. His professional status had been very much improved by the fact of his private fortune. Perhaps there is no reputation in the world of

more use to a man than a reputation for plenty of money. Mrs. Harcross's carriage, Mrs. Harcross's opera-box, Mrs. Harcross's evening parties, nay, even the pines and peaches on Mrs. Harcross's dinner table in early May, brought Hubert Harcross more briefs than he could count. His clerk had learnt to decline retainers under a certain sum, and on one occasion, Mr. Harcross being at the Ryde villa with his wife, refused a fee of a hundred guineas, with daily refresher of twenty-five, on the ground that the weather was too hot for law, a refusal which was worth a thousand to him in reputation. The man who knows how to give himself airs at the right moment, is a man who knows how to succeed. Thus did Hubert Harcross prosper in the first years of his married life, and his name became a marked name, and solicitors in their agony besought his aid as a sure defence, a very tower of strength against the adversary. He was not a noisy advocate, not a florid rhetorical speaker. He had a good voice, which he rarely raised, a quiet level tone and manner, ever and anon relieved by some biting sarcasm that went home to the souls of his antagonists. He was a remarkably successful man, 'lucky,' people called him. To secure Harcross on a side was almost tantamount to securing a victory.

There were times when Mr. Harcross told himself that the life he led was all-sufficing for a man's happiness; that the one thing wanting in it was a very small thing, hardly worth thinking about. Often, seated at his dinner-table surrounded by pleasant faces, with the knowledge that he was admired, envied, liked perhaps by a few, it seemed to him that he must needs be happy; yet after this came the dark hour, the hearth that was cheerless in spite of its luxury, the oppressive sense of unsympathetic companionship, the miserable thought of what might have been, and what was.

Mrs. Harcross, for her part, was thoroughly satisfied. She had as much of her husband's society as his professional engagements permitted. She carried him at her chariot wheel almost wherever she pleased; her mode of life was his mode of life. If he was compelled to be at times a great deal away from her, she did not complain; she was not jealous, because nothing had ever occurred to awaken her jealousy, nor could she conceive it possible that any other woman could exercise the smallest influence on the heart of a man whom she had distinguished by her choice.

Although her husband was not always able to be her escort, she was very rarely without attendance. Weston Vallory was ever ready to waste his time in her service. He was one of those early risers, who contrive to get twice as much out of the day as their lazier fellow-men can obtain out of it, and he had generally accomplished a day's work before luncheon. That office of tame cat, which he had filled so well during Miss Vallory's girlhood, it was his honour and pleasure to retain in the household of Mrs. Harcross. Weston



brought her the newest photographs for her portfolios; Weston hunted celebrities for her Thursday evenings; Weston helped her to select the guests for her dinners, to compose the *menu* even; in short, Weston had an infinite capacity for all those trivial things about which Hubert Harcross disdained to concern himself. He saw Weston Vallory dancing attendance upon his wife, and he was quite content that she should be so attended. It saved him a great deal of trouble, and Augusta was above suspicion. Mrs. Candour herself could hardly have hinted the possibility of a flirtation between the cousins.

In all their married life—not even when it had lasted for some years—had there been half-a-dozen hours of confidential talk between husband and wife. Of Hubert's childhood or youth, of his early manhood, its trials and temptations, Augusta knew nothing. She was not a person to be intensely interested in anything which had occurred before her own time; but she did once or twice express some curiosity upon the subject of her husband's antecedents.

'I don't think there ever was a wife who knew so little about her husband as I do, Hubert!' she said once, in a tone of complaint.

'Simply because there seldom is so little to know as in my case,' Mr. Harcross replied coolly. 'Some men have a history; I have none. My only antecedents are Rugby and Cambridge; my history, incessant hard work. I have worked hard; that is the story of my life so far, my dear Augusta. If there are to be any strong incidents in the drama, the strong incidents are yet to come.'

Mrs. Harcross had been married a year before she penetrated the privacy of those rooms in the Temple. One summer afternoon, when she had made an impromptu dinner-party for the same evening, and wanted to insure her husband's presence at the social board, she ordered her carriage and drove straight to the Temple. Cuppage the respectable ushered her at once into the barrister's room. Mr. Harcross was leaning over a standing-desk, turning the leaves of a brief with a weary air, and looked up with considerable surprise at the radiant vision of Mrs. Harcross sailing towards him with all her canvas spread.

'You here, Augusta! I should as soon have expected a call from the Princess Mary, or any other great lady. Is there an earthquake, or anything of that kind, in the Crescent?'

'I have asked some people to dinner, Hubert, and I wanted to make sure of your dining at home. What comfortable rooms! I thought everything in the Temple was dirty and horrid!'

'Not necessarily, my dear. We sometimes take the liberty to make ourselves comfortable. Will you have some pale sherry, or sherry-and-soda? I have my own particular cellar here, you know.'



‘ You know I never take wine before dinner. What a life-like painting !’ cried Mrs. Harcross, looking up at the picture over the fireplace. ‘ It looks like a portrait. Rather a pretty face ; but there’s something about it I don’t quite like.’

‘ I am sorry for that, Augusta,’ Mr. Harcross answered quietly ; ‘ that picture is a portrait of my mother.’

‘ Indeed ! I beg your pardon ; but you are always so reticent about your belongings, that I may be forgiven for not supposing the picture to be a family portrait. The face is very pretty, no doubt ; but I cannot see any likeness to yourself.’

‘ There is no such likeness. I have the honour to resemble my father and his ancestry.’

‘ With what a sneer you say that ! One would think your father must have been a very unpleasant person.’

‘ I do not say that he was pleasant. My only knowledge of him is that he was a most consummate scoundrel, and that he did in some small measure reap the reward of his scoundrelism, which is not the fate of every scoundrel.’

‘ O Hubert, how shocking it is to hear you speak like that !’

‘ An outrage of the conventionalities of life, is it not ? I suppose every father ought to be a paragon in the opinion of his son. You see, Augusta, what little history I have is not an agreeable one ; it is better for both of us that I should avoid the subject, it always sets my teeth on edge.’

‘ Just as you please. But why was Mrs. Walgrave painted in a fancy dress ?’

‘ Because it was her fancy, I suppose, or perhaps a fashion in that remote age. I was not old enough to inquire into her reasons. The picture is an heirloom, and my only one.’

Mrs. Harcross made a tour of the room, looking at the bookshelves, the mantelpiece, with its neat array of meerschaum pipes, cigar-cases, tobacco-jars, its skeleton clock, and thermometer in the shape of Cleopatra’s Needle ; the bright view from the windows, the commodious arm-chairs. She was hardly pleased to discover that her husband had a better room here than the gloomy chamber allotted to him in Mastodon-crescent.

She departed, however, without giving any expression to her feelings upon this subject ; departed with her mind full of that picture over the mantelpiece.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## A PALPABLE HIT.

As the palace of the Sleeping Beauty awakened suddenly from a slumber and a stillness like unto death into the warm flush and vigour of life, so did Clevedon Hall cast off its torpor one bright summer day five years after Grace Redmayne's death, and begin to live again. Such a clatter of housemaids and scullions, such a hammering of carpenters and cabinet-makers, such a bustle and stir from garret to cellar, such digging and delving, and measuring and pruning, and mowing and gravel-spreading in the sleepy old gardens, such a dust and turmoil of bricklayers repairing the stables, such a barking of dogs and clamour of voices, scaring the solemn spirits of the surrounding woodland.

Sir Francis Clevedon was coming home. His aunt had died, leaving him her sole heir, and he was coming to live at Clevedon Hall with his sister as soon as the place could be made habitable. Mr. Wort came to and fro every day; spent the best part of his day walking about the hall and outbuildings, with a notebook in his hand and a pencil behind his ear, giving instructions and asking questions here, there, and everywhere. There were to be no costly improvements, only a general brushing up and repairing of the old house. To improve or restore such a place as Clevedon Hall would have cost twenty thousand pounds, and with all the duties of a country gentleman to fulfil upon seven thousand a year, Francis Clevedon felt that he had no margin for such an outlay. Nor did he wish to see the place altered or renovated. He wanted to inhabit it as soon as it could be made habitable, and that any improvements to be made in it hereafter should be the growth of his own fancy, or his own necessities.

So the rats were driven from their commodious holes behind the old panelling, the spiders and cockchafers were swept out of their fastnesses in the elaborately carved cornices; an odour of paint, and varnish, and furniture polish pervaded the ancient mansion; staircases and floors were beeswaxed to a treacherous smoothness; the spiral balusters, the massive handrail, shone like the shell of a horse-chestnut just bursting from its green pod. New curtains were hung upon ancient bedsteads, new carpets laid down in the best rooms; a slight sprinkling of modern luxury in the way of cabinet work was introduced among the newer upholstery—the pseudo-classic gimcrackery of the Regency, and the heavy walnut-wood and oaken furniture that had been new in the days of Queen Anne. In some of the larger rooms the furniture was genuine Elizabethan stuff, and had been undisturbed since the house was first furnished; but these

were the state apartments only ; in the living rooms the upholstery had been altered freely to suit the taste of succeeding masters and mistresses, and the result was heterogeneous.

It was a fine old house, notwithstanding, noble with an old-world grandeur ; a place to be entered with reverent footsteps, almost as one enters a church. And so thought Francis Clevedon as he entered it for the first time, in the sunny July noontide, with his sister Sibyl leaning on his arm, and John Wort at his side, flushed and excited, mopping his sunburnt countenance with a huge crimson silk handkerchief, and expounding his arrangements as he went along.

Sir Francis lingered for a minute or so on the topmost step of the broad stone flight that led up to the door of Clevedon Hall—lingered just long enough to take a cursory view of the park and woodland, and to be stared at by a few scattered groups of villagers, gamekeepers, farmers' lads, and the like, who had assembled to witness his arrival, and to cheer him with clamorous welcome as he stepped out of the carriage that had brought him from Tunbridge.

What did they see for their pains ? A tall, well-built young man, with a dark complexion, regular features, and bright gray eyes—an animated handsome young fellow, with flashing white teeth, and a frank friendly smile. The girl beside him was unlike him in every respect—small and fair, and delicate-looking ; pretty, with the fragile prettiness of Dresden china. He was a Clevedon to the backbone, said the friends of the family ; and poor dear Sibyl was only a Wilder.

' I am really very much obliged to you,' he said to the Kentish peasantry, with an amused smile, thinking how the whole thing seemed like a scene out of an opera—he the young Count or Baron, these his faithful subjects ; ' but I don't feel that I have done anything to deserve your kindness. By and by, perhaps, if you find me a good landlord, or a good master, or a good neighbour, as the case may be, I may have a better claim to such a friendly reception. I don't know whether there is such a thing as a barrel of beer in our cellars, but if there is, it shall be broached immediately.'

' We had a wagon-load down from Blackfriars yesterday,' said Mr. Wort ; ' I'll send them out a cask, if you like.'

' By all means. And now, Sibyl, what do you think of Clevedon ?'

' It is lovelier than I ever made it in my dreams,' the girl answered in a low voice. It was such an old dream, this coming to Clevedon, and the realisation of it well-nigh overcame her. ' If mamma had only been with us !' she said regretfully.

' Ah, yes, Sibyl. That takes the sunshine out of it,' answered her brother ; and then the two walked silently through the hall, and that silence, that sudden pause in their delight, was a kind of hom-

age to the dead. Mr. Wort mopped his forehead, and then, too impatient to wait for questioning, broke out at once with his explanations.

‘I kept as close as I could to the letter of your directions, Sir Francis,’ he said in his rapid business-like way; ‘but I have been obliged to exceed my instructions in some small matters: the curtains in the yellow drawing-room, for instance—George the Fourth’s drawing-room, as it was christened in Sir Lucas’s time—were really shameful, not a bit of colour left in ’em, and as rotten as a bell pear. I have taken the liberty to order crimson reps. It looks comfortable, to say the least of it, and contrasts with the cream-and-gold paper—*that* we leave; it cost three-and-sixpence a yard, and the gilding is almost as fresh as when it was first put up. I have taken the liberty also to introduce a new bedstead into Miss Clevedon’s room—a brass Arabian; likewise chintz hangings in bedroom, dressing-room, and morning-room, which are all *on sweet*.’

‘I am sure you are very good, Mr. Wort,’ Miss Clevedon replied, smiling. ‘I never could have slept in one of those queer old beds with plumes of crimson feathers at the top of the posts. Thank you very much for my brass Arabian. You seem to have arranged everything nicely.’

‘I have done my best, you see, miss; but it was all guess-work. I tried as hard as I could to keep close to my orders, and do no more than make the place wind and weather tight, and clean and comfortable.’

‘You have made it charming. O, what a darling room, and what delicious old windows, and what a view! We ought to be very happy here, Francis, after those tiresome dull old German towns. I hope we have nice neighbours, Mr. Wort?’

Mr. Wort was by no means enthusiastic on this point.

‘There’s three or four nice places round about,’ he said; ‘but as to the people, there’s not much use in counting upon them. Nobody worth speaking of seems to stay at home nowadays; they’re off to London for the season, or they’re off to Scotland grouse-shooting and deer-stalking, or they’re on the Continent, or they’re fishing in Norway, while the hares and rabbits are eating up the profits of their tenants’ farms, and the trout in their own streams are being swallowed whole by the jack. I’ve no patience with such people.’

‘I don’t mean to be an absentee, Mr. Wort,’ Sir Francis replied gaily; ‘but we must find some nice neighbours. If we don’t, Sibyl will have the blues, and go wandering about the old place some day till she finds an old woman spinning, and sticks a spindle through her hand, like the Sleeping Beauty. I daresay there is an old woman spinning in one of those pepper-box turrets. We really must find some neighbours.’

‘There’s plenty of villers,’ growled Mr. Wort, ‘Tunbridge way. But they’d hardly be your sort. They go up to the City every day.’

‘I would not mind even that, if the villas were a good sort of fellows. I should prefer Burke’s landed gentry, of course, because they’d put me in the way of playing squire, as I mean to perform the character—the genuine fine-old-English-gentleman kind of thing—if I can. I have got one letter of introduction, by the way, to a Colonel Davenant, the Bungalow, Tunbridge Wells. Do you know anything about him?’

‘I’ve heard tell of the party,’ Mr. Wort answered dubiously; ‘an elderly gentleman that’s been a good deal in the East Indies, and keeps a sight of monkeys.’

‘Monkeys!’ cried Sir Francis and his sister simultaneously.

‘Yes, miss—and worse than monkeys. I have seen the old gentleman on the Pantiles with a beast something like a ferret on his shoulder—a mongoose, I’ve heard them call it—and he pampering and petting of it as if it had been an infant.’

‘Rather eccentric, certainly,’ said Sir Francis, laughing. ‘But I am told the Colonel is a capital fellow. Is there nothing more agreeable than monkeys in his household? I want to find some pleasant companions for my sister. Has he a wife and daughters as well as the mongoose?’

‘There is a daughter, but she’s wrapped up in monkeys; or if it isn’t monkeys, it’s dogs. The Colonel’s place is a regular Zoological Gardens.’

Sir Francis and his sister laughed; and Mr. Wort having pointed out his improvements, departed, to set the barrel of ale going on the lawn before the house, much to the satisfaction of the curious villagers who had interested themselves in the baronet’s arrival. The steward being thus got rid of, the brother and sister rambled gaily about the old house, admiring this and exclaiming at that, and forming all kinds of pleasant schemes for their new life, until it was time to dress for dinner, when Miss Clevedon retired to her apartments, and Sir Francis to his—about a quarter of a mile apart.

They dined in state in James the First’s dining-room, with three men in attendance. Old Tristram Mole had been pensioned off, and now occupied the principal lodge. The new men had been engaged by Mr. Wort, and were accomplished in their respective walks.

‘I should like you to arrange that square parlour on the right of the hall for a secondary dining-room, Jordan, when Miss Clevedon and I are alone,’ Sir Francis said to the butler, at the close of the banquet.

‘I’m so glad you told him that, Frank,’ Sibyl said, when the men had gone. ‘I feel as if I had been dining in a church, or in

one of those great hotel dining-rooms abroad, with the table-d'hôte all to ourselves.'

They grew quite at home in the old house, however, in a very few days, and Sibyl went singing up and down the long corridors in her clear soprano, like a joyous bird, only thinking now and then that there might be ghosts, and that she might come suddenly upon one in a dusky corner.

'I don't think I should much mind a genuine old-established ghost,' she told her brother; 'a lady in a *sacque*, or a Charles-the-Second cavalier, or some one of that kind. Collis was quite afraid the first night we slept here, and insisted upon sleeping with one of the housemaids, instead of in the nice little room they had arranged for her; but I told her next morning that a young woman who did not like ghosts should never take a situation in a good old family like ours. "Of course we have a family ghost," I said; "we have as much right to that as to the genealogical tree in the hall. Depend upon it, Collis, those great bucket boots that hang in the lobby come down at twelve o'clock every night, and tramp, tramp, tramp along all the passages. You'll meet them face to face some night, if you sit up reading novels as you so often do; and I wouldn't answer for that man in armour, or that suit of armour without any man, at the foot of the staircase. *He* looks as if he walked." "I suppose you're only joking, miss," Collis answered, as grave as a judge; "but all I know is, that the rooms and passages upstairs—on *our* floor—smell of ghosts." "Mice, you mean, Collis." "Lor, no, miss; as if I didn't know the difference between the smell of a mouse and a ghost!"'

Of course all the county people who happened to be at home at this time came to call on Sir Francis and Miss Clevedon, and were duly charmed with the baronet and his sister. There seemed to be no lack of agreeable neighbours, without counting the objectionable villas about Tunbridge, which went daily to business in the City. Colonel Davenant, perhaps not esteeming himself on a level with county persons, or perhaps too much wrapped up in monkeys for the performance of small social duties, did not come. So one bright afternoon in August, Sir Francis rode over to the Wells to deliver his letter of introduction. The letter had been written by one of his most intimate friends, who had given him a glowing account of the old Indian officer.

Colonel Davenant's place was known as the Bungalow. It had begun its existence as a villa, with some pretensions to the gothic; but having fallen into the hands of the Colonel, whose inventive mind was apt to exercise itself on everything within its range, had been barbarised and orientalised out of all architectural character by divers enlargements and improvements, all evolved from the inner consciousness of that gentleman, in utter defiance of all rules



and conventions of the building art. A huge verandah jutting out from a very small drawing-room ; a domed conservatory—after the model of a mosque at Delhi—overtopping the dining-room ; a Pompeian court and fountain behind the kitchen, where the Colonel could sit on a carpet smoking his hookah, and discussing the arrangement of his tiffin, or his dinner, with that faithful slave his cook ; the Sister-Anne turret—a campanello tower, whence the Colonel could survey valley, common, hill, and woodland : these were among the trifling eccentricities of the Bungalow. The effect was curious but not unpleasant. The house was rich and gay with Indian spoil—monster jars and curious carved furniture in Bombay blackwood, gorgeous silken stuffs and ivory temples ; and in all the rooms there were birds and flowers, and living animals reclining on the skins of dead animals ; a yapping of small dogs and twittering of songless Australian birds, and a squalling of parrots.

The afternoon was exceptionally warm, and the Colonel was enjoying a siesta by the side of his fountain. Thither a neat parlour-maid ushered the stranger, through the garden, and by a somewhat circuitous path meandering through a shrubbery of laurel and bay and monkey trees and castor-oil plants, which the Colonel called his jungle.

Sir Francis did not emerge from the jungle without a small adventure. In one of the windings of the narrow path he met a young lady who reminded him of Robinson Crusoe. A young lady who carried a green silk umbrella of foreign manufacture, and upon whose shoulder there perched a small Java monkey, and about whose footsteps there crowded some half-dozen dogs and doglings—from a lank half-grown Scotch deerhound to a coffee-coloured black-muzzled pug.

Francis Clevedon only caught one transient glimpse of the face under the green umbrella—a bright girlish face, with Irish gray eyes, and a sweet smiling mouth. He had just time to see this, and that Miss Crusoe was tall and slim, and carried herself with the air of a princess. She acknowledged Sir Francis's bow with a gracious movement of her pretty head, and passed lightly on, while the monkey looked back to hiss and spit at the stranger in an alarmingly vixenish way.

‘ Miss Davenant, I suppose ? ’ Francis inquired of the servant.

‘ Yes, sir, that's our young lady. I hope you'll excuse the monkey, sir ; he doesn't mean any harm, but he's jealous of strangers. ’

They came to a little green arcade, and through this into the Pompeian court, where the Colonel sat on his musnud, with his back against the marble rim of the basin, snoring audibly. He woke up with a start as the maid announced Sir Francis Clevedon, swore a prayer or two, or perhaps something the reverse of a prayer, and then rose to receive his guest in a hearty soldierlike fashion.



'Take the arm-chair, Sir Francis, and if you like a hookah, there's one ready to your hand on that table. Heartily glad to see any friend of Sinclair's—congratulate you on taking possession of Clevedon. Fine old place, noble old place, plenty of good shootin', and one of the best trout streams in the county. Sinclair wrote me word of your return, and I meant to have come over to call before this, but this weather tries an old man, sir. I feel the heat more here than ever I did in Bengal. I'll turn on the fountain, by the bye; I daresay you like the sound of a fountain;' and thereupon the Colonel applied himself to some complicated arrangement of screws and cranks which seemed to involve a good deal of hard labour, and threatened to put the gallant officer into a profuse perspiration.

'Pray don't trouble yourself on my account,' remonstrated Sir Francis. 'I find your room most delightfully cool, even without the fountain.'

'Do you?' cried the Colonel, gratified, and smiling in the midst of his struggles with a very stiff screw. 'Built it myself after my own design; laid every brick with my own hand, one bricklayer's labourer, and an odd boy to hold the ladder. There's a settlement in that corner, but it won't go any farther. But we'll have the fountain. I like to take it out of the water-company, because they won't let me pay by meter. Made the fountain myself from a plan which a fool of a plumber told me was opposed to every principle of engineering; but it works, you see, in spite of the beggar,' concluded the Colonel triumphantly, as the water shot up with an explosive sound like a small Niagara, then flew off at a tangent, liberally besprinkling Sir Francis, and at last composed itself into a quirk, quirk, guggle, guggle, guggle, quirk, of the meekest description.

The two gentlemen began their acquaintance by talking of that excellent fellow their common friend, Major Sinclair, by whose side the Colonel had fought in the Punjab, and whom Sir Francis had met at Brussels, settled for life in one of the white houses on the boulevard, with a wife and half a dozen children, all talking broad Scotch, and arrayed to the teeth in tartan and Shetland wool. After this absent friend, his excellence of heart, and his various idiosyncrasies had been duly discussed, the Colonel entertained Sir Francis with an anecdote or two from his personal experience, not occupying much more than half an hour, which in the Colonel was brevity, and after the anecdotes Sir Francis's host volunteered to show him the Bungalow.

'It was a square box of a place when I bought it,' he said; 'a man might as well live in a packing-case; but I flatter myself I've imparted a good deal of character to it. I like a house to reflect the individuality of the owner. To my mind, a man could hardly enter my hall-door without saying to himself, Anglo-Indian! old soldier!'

Sir Francis wondered where the hall-door might be, and whether the house was only accessible by the meandering paths of the jungle and the Pompeian court adjoining the kitchen.

‘By the way, you’ll dine with us to-day, of course?’

Sir Francis hesitated; Sibyl would wait dinner for him.

‘No, thanks. I should be delighted, but my sister is living with me, and she’ll expect me home to dinner.’

‘Never mind that. She’ll wait half an hour, and then give you up. Or I could send a boy on a pony, if you like. Women never care much about dinner. The wide distance between the mental capacities of the two sexes is firmly established by that one fact: a woman’s intellect is incapable of a broad and philosophical comprehension of the dinner-question. She is the slave of conventionality, and has no more culinary invention than an Abyssinian. Halloo, Japson, what are you going to give us for dinner to-day?’

At this appeal, a stout rosy-faced matron looked out of a window bordered with a vine which the Colonel had coaxed to grow in his peristyle, a matron whose ruddy visage was obscured by a floury dust, as the rising moon by some fleecy cloud.

‘Lor, sir, you give the horder yourself, this morning.’

‘True, Japson, but memory is sometimes treacherous. This gentleman is going to dine with me—’

‘But really—’ protested Sir Francis.

‘My dear sir, it is a settled thing. The boy goes on the pony with an apologetic message to Miss Clevedon. Now, Japson, be categorical. Imprimis, red mullet stewed in Madeira.’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Soup I abjure in summer, Sir Francis, as a sloppy conventionality which distracts a cook’s attention from her fish. Potage à la reine thickened with pounded almonds is not a bad thing, and good green-pea soup is palatable. I let Japson make those when she is in a good temper, and can answer for the smoothness of the purée. After the mullet a prawn curry—eh, Japson?’

‘Yes, sir,’ answered the cook, grinning.

‘Don’t forget the grated cocoa-nut. After the curry?’

‘A stewed fowl.’

‘In half mourning; that is to say, in a white sauce with truffles. Be liberal with your truffles, Japson; kill the fatted calf for my friend, Sir Francis Clevedon. Any grouse?’

‘Yes, sir; the brace you sent in this morning.’

‘To be sure, prime young birds. I always stroll to the Wells before breakfast, and select my own comestibles, Sir Francis. Those scoundrels the tradesmen know me, and would hang themselves sooner than send me an inferior article. Be careful of your bread-crumbs, Japson, and you may give us an apricot omelette, and a parmesan soufflé. Now, Sir Francis?’

‘If I really am to have the honour of dining with you to-day, Colonel, I may as well send my groom back with the horses and a message for my sister,’ said Francis, with a very vivid recollection of the face under the green umbrella, and a somewhat frivolous desire to improve his acquaintance with Miss Crusoe.

‘By all means. I’ll show you my garden, and we’ll go round to the stable and hunt up your man.’

The garden was as eccentric as the house, and arranged for the pleasure and accommodation of the animal creation rather than for the diversion of their masters. There was a grotto, or cave of rock-work overarching a pool, in which a tame otter flopped about to the infinite delight of the Colonel, who loitered a minute or so to feed the beast with fragments of biscuit from the pocket of his Cashmere morning coat. There were cages of birds, artfully placed among the ornamental timber, with a view to cheating those feathered creatures into the belief that they were the denizens of a primeval forest; there were miniature classic temples, and mediæval fortresses, one with a bristling row of wine-bottles, neck outwards, to represent cannon, inhabited by various dogs, which sprang out to caress the Colonel as he passed. There was a portable Chinese pagoda, hung with bells for the occupation of the Java monkey.

The stables were at the side of the house, and here the Colonel’s eccentricity had exhibited itself in the conversion of a hay-loft into a billiard-room, accessible only by an external staircase in the Alpine chalet style. He kept a couple of saddle-horses for himself and his daughter, a pony and a basket-chaise (which he called his palki); and his stable-yard was for the most part occupied by a pheasantry. Here they found the groom looking at the pheasants. His master dispatched him with a message for Miss Clevedon, and this being done, was free to accompany the Colonel over the Bungalow, and to listen to that officer’s somewhat prolix histories of various curios and other trophies which adorned the rooms.

Sir Francis was beginning to think they would never arrive at the apartment inhabited by Miss Crusoe, when Colonel Davenant opened an unexpected door in about as inconvenient a corner as a door could be placed, and introduced his guest into the drawing-room, a small low room with a wide window running along one side of it, and opening into a substantially-built verandah, larger and loftier than the apartment itself, and paved with variously-coloured tiles. The room proper held only a piano, a few easy-chairs, and a coffee-table or two; but the verandah, or annex, was large enough to accommodate plenty of chairs and ottomans, on one of which a young lady was seated, dressed in white muslin, reading a novel, with a couple of dogs at her feet.

This was Miss Crusoe, who put down her book and rose to greet her father with a charming smile—a smile which she extended in

modified degree to Sir Francis Clevedon upon his being presented to her. Seeing her for the first time unshadowed by the umbrella, Sir Francis decided that Miss Davenant was even prettier than he had supposed. The bright piquant face, with its gray eyes and dark lashes; the rippling brown hair, brushed loosely back from a broad white forehead, and breaking into mutinous curls here and there; the slim swan-like throat, and the lofty carriage of the head, seemed to him perfectly beautiful. He made a kind of breakneck plunge into some rather commonplace observations about the Bungalow, the Bungalow gardens, and the Bungalow zoological collection; but felt himself less at his ease than usual; and was relieved presently to find himself seated upon an ottoman, making friends with the youthful deerhound, who was of a gregarious temper, and getting on very tolerably with Miss Davenant.

Georgie her father called her. What a pretty name, and one that suited her admirably! thought Sir Francis. She had a somewhat boyish frankness of manner, not harsh, or coarse, or masculine, but certainly boyish: the gracious ease of a well-bred Etonian. She had never been at a boarding-school, or even under the milder sway of a governess at home; she had grown up like one of the flowering plants that took their own way in the Colonel's jungle; masters had come to the Bungalow on certain days to teach her their several arts, and for the rest, her father had educated her—or not educated her—as the case might be.

Sir Francis stayed to dinner, and stayed till eleven o'clock that night, by which hour he and Miss Davenant seemed to have known each other quite a long time. The Colonel told a few longish stories of Indian warfare, gave a slight sketch of Lieutenant-general Davenant's (his father's) career in the Peninsula, which lasted an hour or so, and otherwise beguiled the evening with agreeable converse. Sir Francis was of course attentive to those narrations, but he contrived between whiles to find out a good deal about Georgie's tastes and habits: when she rode, where she rode, whether she competed for prizes at local flower-shows, or visited the poor, or devoted herself exclusively to the brute creation.

He found that she did a little of everything, except exhibiting any specimens of her horticultural skill at the flower-shows.

'I give the prizes sometimes at the cottage flower-shows,' she said, 'but things don't grow in our greenhouse quite as well as they might. Sometimes Tufto scratches them up—you know very well you do, you wicked Tufto!'—shaking her head at the deerhound—'or Pedro—the monkey, you know—knocks over the pots with his tail. Grant, our gardener, is quite unhappy about it; but the fact is, flowers and animals do not get on very well together.'

'My sister has a passion for flowers; goes in tremendously for ferns, and that kind of thing; and has stuffed her poor little head

as full of their names as if she was a perambulating botanical dictionary. She has just begun building a fern-house, which is to be all dark-green glass, and she means to do wonders in that line. I hope you and she will be good friends.'

'I have no doubt I shall like her very much.'

'Will you call upon her, or shall she come to you?'

'Just as she pleases. I am not at all particular about forms and ceremonies.'

'She shall come to-morrow, then, although you are the oldest inhabitant.'

'Thanks. I shall be so pleased to see her. Is she fond of animals?'

'I hardly know. I think I ought to answer as the man did who was asked if he could play the fiddle. He didn't know, as he had never tried. Sibyl has not had any opportunity of developing her taste for the brute species. She only finished her education a year or so ago, at a convent in Bruges; and since then she has been travelling with me. But I daresay she has a latent taste for dogs and monkeys.'

'I don't think she can help liking Pedro,' Miss Davenant replied naively, with an affectionate glance towards the warmest corner of the little drawing-room, where that luxurious animal, the Java monkey, was coiled up on a sheepskin rug.

Sir Francis rode homeward by moonlight, very well pleased with the eccentricities of the Bungalow.

'Sinclair was right,' he said to himself. 'The Colonel is a capital fellow. I wish his stories of the Punjab and the Peninsula were a trifle shorter. But that's a detail. What a lovely face it is! Georgie—Georgie—Georgie Davenant!' The name repeated itself over and over again, in time with the tramp of his horse's hoofs, like an old rhyme.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

'FOR LIFE, FOR DEATH.'

MISS CLEVEDON drove over to the Bungalow on the following afternoon. She was one of those nice easy-tempered girls who are always ready to cultivate any one their brothers may happen to admire; not a girl to place stumbling-blocks across a brother's path to matrimony, from any selfish desire to preserve to herself the advantages of his bachelorhood. It was very nice to reign over such a mansion as Clevedon Hall; but Sibyl had no genius for house-keeping, and she felt that as a country squire it was Francis's bounden duty to take unto himself a wife.

At breakfast Francis was full of his dinner at the Bungalow: the fountain; the cook looking out of the window; all the ins

and outs, and ups and downs of the house, improved by the Colonel's architectural fancies; the zoological collection; the old soldier himself, with his long stories and vehement epithets; and finally Miss Davenant.

'Is she pretty?' Sibyl asked curiously.

'I think her remarkably pretty. I don't know whether she has a classical profile, a Grecian nose coming straight down from her forehead, or anything of that kind; in fact, I rather think her nose has a slight upward tendency; or it may be the way she holds her head—as high as if she were a princess of the blood royal. In short, you see, Sibyl, I can't positively say whether she is regularly beautiful; but if you take into consideration her eyes—which are splendid—and her expression, and vivacity, and a kind of *je ne sais quoi*-ishness, you cannot fail to admit that she is a lovely girl.'

'Good gracious, Francis, what a confused description: splendid eyes, and a turned-up nose, and her head stuck up in a conceited way!'

'No, Sibyl, I didn't say in a conceited way. She has no more conceit than patient Grizzle.'

'Bother patient Grizzle!' Miss Clevedon exclaimed contemptuously; 'I never had any patience with that ridiculous creature. Of course a man wrote the story—it was like him to do it, just to show what foolish sheep-like beings *you* would like us to be,—and it never was true. Does she dress well?'

'Patient Grizzle?'

'No, sir. This paragon of yours, who isn't pretty, and yet is.'

'I really can't venture to express my opinion on such an important question as that. She had a white gown and a green umbrella, and looked nice.'

'A white gown and a green umbrella! what an absurd young woman! I don't wonder Mr. Wort turned up his nose at these Davenants.'

'Now, there's no use in trying to be disagreeable, Sibyl; it isn't your *métier*. Miss Davenant is a charming girl, and I'm sure you'll like her as much as—'

'As much as what, sir?'

'As much as I do.'

'What, Francis, again?'

This 'again' had relation to certain passages in Sir Francis's past life. He had not reached his twenty-seventh year without falling in love a few times on the way; he had, indeed, been in and out of love, as a rule, about once in a twelvemonth; and his sister, in whom he had been wont to confide, had no profound faith in the constancy of his fancies. A man who has a fair estate, the world all before him, and no particular occupation, is apt to be rather hard hit by any pretty face that may flit across his pathway.



‘I think you ought to plead like those grotto-boys who besieged our carriage in London the other day, Francis, “It’s only once a year.” Pray is Miss Davenant prettier than Euphrasie Lamont, the Spanish-looking beauty you fell in love with at the convent?’

‘What! that little tawny dwarfish thing?’

‘O, Francis! you raved about her.’

‘Did I? She was well enough, I daresay, for a little one; but this girl is as tall as—as Helen of Troy.’

‘How do you know that Helen was tall?’

‘Tennyson says so—

“divinely tall,  
And most divinely fair.”

O, I’m sure of it. Of course Helen was tall; you can’t fancy Clytemnestra a little woman; they were sisters, you know.’

‘What a horrid family!’

‘Well, yes, they were rather a queer lot, answering to some of our English nobility—a taint in the blood, I suppose. I think I remember that little Lamont girl had fine eyes, but such a duodecimo-ish creature. Lady Clevedon must be tall.’

‘Lady Clevedon! Has it come to that?’

‘It has come to nothing, except—another cup of tea, if you please. You are going to call upon Miss Davenant, and see the zoological collection this afternoon.’

‘But oughtn’t she to call upon me first?’

‘I don’t know anything about the oughts of the case. But you are going this afternoon—I told her so.’

Miss Clevedon submitted with a pretty little grimace, and drove off to the Bungalow directly after luncheon, enjoying not a little the novel splendour of her barouche and two men-servants.

The visit was altogether a success. Sibyl admired all the eccentricities of house and garden, and the two girls were delighted with each other, swearing an undying friendship on the spot, as it were. After this call the Colonel and his daughter rode over to the Hall one morning; whereby Sir Francis had the opportunity of seeing Georgina Davenant in her habit, which became her above any other garment, and also of showing the old house and grounds to his new friends, the inventive Colonel suggesting an alteration in every room they entered.

‘Invention—construction, perhaps I should say, is my forte, sir,’ he said. ‘If this house were mine, I’d make it the finest in England.’

‘But it is so already, papa—one of the finest, I should think,’ replied Georgie.

‘Undoubtedly, my dear; but its capabilities of improvement are enormous. That oriel window over the hall-door, for instance. Very fine, no doubt; but why not have oriel windows along the



whole range of your front, instead of these flat things? Then there's the groined roof in the dining-hall, sombre to the last degree; cut away all that antiquated woodwork, and paint your ceiling blue, picked out with gold stars. Then you have those open colonnades yonder; a mere waste of space; fill them in with violet-coloured plate-glass, and make one a smoking-divan and the other a billiard-room. That's what I call bringing modern enlightenment to bear upon Elizabethan incapacity.'

'I think I prefer Elizabethan shortcomings to Victorian improvements, Colonel,' Sir Francis observed, smiling. 'I should hardly care to change the character of the place.'

'Prejudice, my good sir; the English mind all over. Your true-born Englishman will go on enduring any amount of inconvenience rather than infringe a set of arbitrary rules made by some dunder-headed architect. Character, indeed! Where's the character in my house? Yet I think you'll admit its comfortable.'

'I most freely admit that it is a delightful house,' said Sir Francis, with a little stolen glance at Georgie.

'Of course everybody admits that it's comfortable; but you should have heard the opposition I had to encounter from officious asses who call themselves my friends while I was building. "You mustn't have your kitchen in the middle of your house," says one; "you'll smell your dinner!" And I like to smell my dinner, I told the blockhead; I like to know what I'm going to have, and to prepare my mind for it. "You can't have one bedroom upon one level, and another bedroom upon another level," remarked an officious idiot. "Can't I?" said I; "I'll show you whether I can or not. If I want my dining-room loftier than my drawing-room, it shall be loftier; and I'll have every one of my bedrooms upon different levels, to spite you." "You mustn't have one side of your house higher than another," said that prince of fools, the builder's foreman; "for if you do, your chimneys will smoke." "Then my chimneys shall smoke," said I; and they do—when the wind's in the west; but I've got a German stove or two to remedy that; and I've had my own way.'

After this came many interchanges of civility between Clevedon Hall and the Bungalow. Sir Francis organised drives and excursions to various points of attraction in the picturesque line, in which the Colonel and his daughter consented to join, with pleasant returns in the sunset to the Hall or the Bungalow for a half-past-eight-o'clock dinner. The two girls, Sibyl and Georgie, were sworn friends; English country-house life was new to Miss Clevedon, and Miss Davenant was able to advise and enlighten her upon many questions. She wanted to do some small amount of good among the poor round Clevedon; and Georgie, who with her dogs was a familiar visitor in many humble households about the Wells, and

had a wonderful knack for getting on with poor people, volunteered to set her in the way of being useful.

If Sibyl began by protesting against Francis's subjugation, she ended by almost worshipping the girl he admired. There was no such thing as opposition, therefore, to whet the keen edge of Sir Francis's passion. The course of this, his latest, love ran on velvet, and little by little the fact came home to him that this last-born passion was something serious. He had been doubtful of himself at first, remembering those former episodes in his life, and how he had more than once seemed to be very far gone. But no, this was the real thing; he had admired a good many pretty women in his time, but mind, heart, and soul had never been held in bondage as they were now by Georgie Davenant. The bright frank face with its innocent young beauty, the proud generous nature which unconsciously revealed itself in trifles, what more need he desire in the woman who was to share and brighten his existence? He watched Sibyl and Georgie's growing affection for each other with delight. His only sister was very dear to him, and it would have distressed him if his choice of a wife had brought about any lessening of the bond between them. It would have seemed a hard thing to him if he had brought a wife home to Clevedon Hall who would have made the place anything less than a home to his sister.

He looked back upon those bygone flirtations as so many glorious escapes. What if he had flung himself away matrimonially upon one of those fallen idols, and come home to Clevedon bound by the fetters of an injudicious marriage—come home to behold his 'fate' in Georgie Davenant? 'She would have been fatal to me, let me meet her when I might,' he said to himself. O, the anguish of meeting that radiant creature too late!

For a man so completely his own master, the process of wooing is apt to go swiftly. There was no ground for hesitation or delay; and before these two young people had known each other a fortnight, it might have been tolerably clear to the eye of a competent observer, that the admiration was mutual. In their confidential discourse Sibyl now and then ventured on a leading question, and had contrived thus to discover the state of her friend's affections. Georgie was not engaged, that she admitted without hesitation.

'I am so glad, dear,' cried Sibyl.

'But why?' Miss Davenant inquired, blushing a little.

'O, I really can scarcely say why. But I am glad. An engaged girl is always so taken up with her lover, and never seems to think of anything except what she is going to do after she is married; in short, an engaged girl is hardly any good for a friend. And I like you so much, darling, and want to have you all to myself.'

Miss Clevedon, whose conventual education and foreign life had

given her few opportunities of learning the equestrian art, was glad to ride with Georgie Davenant, who was as peerless in the saddle as Di Vernon, and as good a whip as if she had been a member of the house of Nero. Under this gentle guidance, also, Sibyl learnt to drive a pair of rather spirited brown cobs, without feeling in mortal terror and blind uncertainty as to what the cobs might take it into their heads to do. They were very happy together, and the two bright girlish faces grew to be welcome in the pretty cottages round Clevedon, a part of Kent in which the rustic population is lodged with a certain luxury of architecture, dainty gothic cottages, with a neat half acre of garden and orchard, dotting the well-kept high-roads here and there.

So things went on their smooth course, as things do go now and then for the favoured ones of this world, until one bright October morning, towards the end of the month, when he had known her more than ten weeks—an age of hope and happiness—Sir Francis, beguiling his idle morning with a gallop in Felsted Wood, overtook Miss Davenant, who happened to have ridden that way for her daily airing, on her gray Arab Selim, attended by the most discreet of grooms, a gray-moustached old lancer, whom the Colonel had taken from his own regiment.

The syce, as the Colonel insisted on calling him, fell back out of earshot as Sir Francis accosted his young mistress, and the lovers rode on side by side, over the fallen fir-cones, through the spicy atmosphere, radiant with youth and hope, like Lancelot and Guinivere.

It was the old, old story, told in the frankest, manliest words that ever came straight from the heart of a speaker. They rode out of the pine-wood plighted to each other, 'for life, for death.'

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### GEORGIE'S SETTLEMENT.

THE Colonel was delighted. Of course he had seen, from an early stage, which way matters were drifting; and he had suffered them to drift, without interference or hindrance from him, proving himself the very wisest of match-makers by that judicious quiescence. He had lived his own life, consuming much Latakia, or mild Turkish, in his atrium; conversing with his cook; scheming various alterations and improvements in the Bungalow; educating Pedro, the monkey, in those polite arts which make a monkey a gentleman; and otherwise enjoying himself in the serenest manner; always ready to join the young people in any excursion or party they might choose to plan, and beaming upon them with a countenance which was as the very spiritual light and sunshine of a jovial mind.

When that solemn question came to be asked, which is somewhat awful for the briefless barrister or the fledgling curate, but easy enough for a man with a landed estate, and seven thousand per annum in shares, debentures, consols, Egyptian bonds, and so on, the Colonel behaved with an airy grace that was charming.

‘My dear fellow, if I must part with my little girl—and I needn’t say that it’s a hard thing for a man in my position to do it—my only tie to life, sir, except the mongoose; if I must part with Georgie, I’d rather it should be to you than to any one else. First and foremost, you’re a——good fellow, and I’ve a——respect for you. Secondly, my little girl will be near me. You’re not like those fellows in the service, who have come proposing for her, coolly informing me that as there was every prospect of their regiment being ordered off to Japan, or Cochin-China, or Timbuctoo, as the case might be, early in the spring, they would like the wedding to come off soon, if I pleased. I did not please, and luckily for me Georgie didn’t please either; for a tear or two from her would have knocked me over at once.’

Thus, and in many more words, with the mongoose promenading about his capacious chest and shoulders the while, did the Colonel give his consent. Then came a little talk about settlements; Francis eager to lavish the chief part of his wealth on his betrothed, the Colonel protesting against that quixotic generosity.

‘We will do what is right, sir, and no more. I’m not a man of business myself; but we’ll put ourselves in the hands of some conscientious fellow who is a man of business, and he shall decide what is fair and equitable in the case. Rolling-stone as I have been, I have not gone through life without gathering some small amount of moss. I can give my girl a few thousands, and at my death she will inherit—’ the Colonel paused, and seemed to swell with importance at this point—‘THE BUNGALOW! I think, although it may not suit her convenience to occupy it, my child will value the work of her old father’s hands when he is under the turf. She will take care that the roof is kept in repair, and that the fountain works daily.’

The marriage was not to take place until early in the following spring. Francis would fain have had it sooner; but the Colonel and Georgie both declared that even this interval would make a very brief engagement.

‘You can know so little of me,’ she said to her lover. ‘How can I feel sure that I am really the sort of person you think me? Suppose, when we are married, you should find that you have made quite a mistake after all. Wouldn’t *that* be dreadful! Sibyl tells me you were in love ever so many times abroad, and that you always ended by finding out that the young lady didn’t suit you in the least. How can I tell that you may not find out the same thing about me?’

‘My darling, I have known and loved you from the first time I saw you, and I never loved any one before in my life.’

‘O Frank! after all Sibyl has told me—’

‘Sibyl’s statements are true and false, dear. I have had a sort of a—kind of a—predilection for two or three young women in the course of my life; have, perhaps, flirted—I suppose you would call it, and have even gone so far as to fancy myself in love; but from the moment I loved you I knew that those other affairs were the merest fancies. In short I have had a series of escapes, Georgie, and my fate has always been waiting for me here; and if it comes to any examination of antecedents, Miss Davenant, I shall be glad to receive some information about that Captain Bangle, who wanted you to accompany him to Timbuctoo, and Major Hawkins, who was anxious to export you to Japan.’

‘O Frank! I never gave either of them the faintest encouragement. They were friends of papa’s, and used to dine with us very often, and were always extremely polite, asking me to sing and play, and pretending to be interested in Pedro and Tufto, and even to admire the mungoose; and then all at once they broke out in a desperate way, asking me to marry them. But indeed, Frank, it wasn’t my fault.’

‘And it isn’t my fault that I love you to distraction, darling.’

That was a happy Christmas at Clevedon Hall, an innocent Arcadian Christmas; very different from the gourmandism and curaçoa-bibbing, and whist and écarté playing, which had obtained there when Sir Lucas was in his prime; a Christian festival, with much pampering and petting of the humble tenants, and pleasant party-giving in the servants’ hall. Sir Francis began like a prince who meant to be popular. They had plenty of friends already in the neighbourhood; everybody had been eager to know them: ancient squires, who remembered Sir Lucas in his best days, stretched out the hand of friendship to his son; matrons and daughters vied with one another in civilities to Sibyl.

There was a shade of disappointment when, about November, it began to be patent to the world within a twenty-mile radius of Clevedon that Sir Francis and Miss Davenant were engaged to be married. ‘Not one of the county families, you know, my dear, and altogether a poor match for him,’ the Kentish damsels told one another. It did seem rather a hard thing that the baronet had been so prompt in his wooing, that there should have been no clear course open to those fair young thoroughbreds, who would fain have entered themselves for the Clevedon Stakes.

Happy days and nights, thrice happy youth! Christmas and the New Year fled like a dream—skating on the great pond in the Chase, sleighing on the snow-bound roads; dinners, and carpet-dances, and acted charades. Sir Francis spent his money royally,

but in simple pleasures, in which seven thousand a year would go a long way. He had no idea of following in the footsteps of his father.

Spring came; a warm spring, with cloudless blue skies. Sir Francis and Miss Davenant were to be married when the hawthorn was in flower. The Colonel was to take his daughter to London in April to complete her trousseau, and pay duty visits to numerous relations, who had a right to her confidence on such an occasion. Sir Francis could hardly be expected to exist in Kent while Georgie was staying at Westbourne-terrace; so he went up to town with the Colonel and his daughter, and established himself at a West-end hotel, within a ten minutes' cab drive of his betrothed. There were the settlements to be arranged; and the question of trustees, being propounded to the Colonel, sorely puzzled that gallant officer.

'I'm an old man myself,' he said, 'and never was a man of business, so I'm no good. I know plenty of men—men whom I could trust—but the misfortune is, they're most of them about my own age, so they're no good. A trustee to a marriage settlement ought to be younger than the husband and wife, by rights. I'll talk it over with old Vallory.'

To talk things over with old Vallory—the great William Vallory, of the firm of Harcross, Vallory, and Vallory—was one of the Colonel's reasons for being in London. His wife had been a Miss Harcross, niece of that very Stephen Harcross who left all his money to Augusta Vallory, much to the indignation of his relatives. His brother, George Harcross, married the girl whom he, Stephen, had desired to marry; whereby the lawyer had abjured all kindred with his rival, and refused to see Georgina, his niece, the sole offspring of this marriage, until some time after her father's death, when he relented so far as to show some small kindnesses to her widowed mother. He was tolerably civil to that dashing young Lancer, Captain Davenant, who fell in love with Georgina Harcross and married her within the space of three months. The marriage settlement—a very small matter, the late George Harcross having failed ignominiously in the silk trade, and the Captain having little more than his sword to bestow on his wife—had been drawn up by Harcross and Vallory, and from that time forward Harcross and Vallory had been Thomas Davenant's solicitors. He had an unbounded confidence in their learning and sagacity, and it was to them he came naturally for counsel in his present difficulty.

He was admitted to a conference in that sacred chamber wherein William Vallory in his own person communicated the words of wisdom to his most distinguished—or most profitable—clients, a chamber almost as unapproachable as that inmost temple where the Mikado of Japan shrouds his glory from the vulgar eye. Here he found the chief of the firm trimming his nails meditatively before a



table covered with papers, and with three clerks in attendance, who vanished quietly on the entrance of the client.

'Come and dine with me this evening,' said the solicitor, in his most cordial tone; 'come to Acropolis-square, and we can talk the business over after dinner. Delighted to hear your daughter is going to make such a good match. I know something of the Clevedon estate; we had Sir Lucas in our hands, in point of fact, when he was a young man, and a deuced slippery customer he was. The property is clear, I hope, by this time?'

'The estate is as clear—as clear, as—as the Bungalow,' exclaimed the Colonel triumphantly.

'I beg your pardon—'

'The Bungalow—my little place at Tunbridge Wells. Enlarged and improved it with my own hands, sir; can lay a hundred of stocks or plaster a wall with any bricklayer in England. You ought to come down and see me, Vallory; I can give you a good bed, a good dinner, and a good bottle of wine.'

'You are excessively kind—I should be most happy; but I have really so little time for relaxation, and when I can get a week or so, I run down to Ryde. Is Sir Francis in town?'

'Sir Francis is at the Leviathan.'

'Then ask him to come with you, and your daughter too. My daughter and her husband are coming to me to-night—Mr. and Mrs. Harcross—he took the name of Harcross when he married, you know; it was one of the conditions of the will.'

The Colonel did know, or had at any rate been informed of the fact at the time. A man who cared much for money might have scarcely relished the idea of meeting a lady in the possession of wealth which should by rights have come his way; but Thomas Davenant was not a lover of money, and was quite ready to clasp the hand of amity with Mrs. Harcross.

'Your son-in-law is beginning to make rather a figure in the world, isn't he?' said the Colonel, who was an assiduous student of the daily papers.

'My son-in-law is one of the best parliamentary barristers we have,' replied Mr. Vallory, with a satisfied air. The marriage had turned out so much better than he had expected. Hubert Harcross was making between two and three thousand a year, and Mrs. Harcross's visiting-book was becoming almost as aristocratic as the *Almanach de Gotha*.

'If you've a lot of people with you this evening, we sha'n't have much chance of talking over this settlement business,' said the Colonel.

'Well, perhaps not an opportunity for any long talk; but I can think the matter over in the mean time, and give you my opinion in three words. All you want is a good trustee; the settlement itself



I can arrange with Sir Francis Clevedon's solicitor in an hour. You want a good man of business as trustee, and I have a man in my eye who'll suit you, if he will undertake the responsibility.'

'Who is he?'

'Never mind that; I'd better sound him upon the subject before I mention his name. Half-past seven this evening in Acropolis-square, No. 10.'

Colonel Davenant and his daughter were staying with a married sister of the Colonel's in Westbourne-terrace—a lady who had made a very good match in India under the Colonel's guardianship; and who, being childless herself, took an amazing delight in all the details of Georgie's courtship, and the preparation of the trousseau.

At half-past seven o'clock that evening the Acropolis-square drawing-rooms opened their lofty doors to admit Colonel and Miss Davenant, and Sir Francis Clevedon, announced with a grandiose air by Mr. Vallory's butler. There was a subdued murmur of conversation in the room as they entered. The Harcrosses had arrived, and the inevitable Weston Vallory was airing himself before the fireplace. Mrs. Harcross advanced with her father to receive Miss Davenant, and almost crushed poor Georgie with the splendour of her presence. The sparkling coquettish little face seemed well-nigh extinguished by Augusta's regular beauty, expansive figure, and gorgeous attire.

She was as cordial to Miss Davenant as she could be to any one. 'I really feel as if we were a sort of cousins,' she said, after the first greeting; 'I hope we shall see each other very often while you are in town.'

'Sir Francis Clevedon, my daughter, Mrs. Harcross,' said Mr. Vallory; and Augusta made the baronet a gracious curtsy, which she had learnt from a French dancing-master; such a curtsy as Marie Antoinette might have made to a courtier in those days when she appeared above the zenith, 'glittering like the morning star,' full of life and splendour and joy.

But in the very act of acknowledging her father's introduction Mrs. Harcross gave a little cry of surprise.

'What's the matter, my dear?' inquired her father, surprised at this outrage of the proprieties.

'How strange that you never told me, papa!'

'Never told you what, my love?'

'Of the likeness between Sir Francis Clevedon and Hubert.'

Mr. Vallory looked at his son-in-law, who was standing on the hearth-rug, listening, with no great appearance of interest, to some remark of Weston's—a tall commanding figure, a dark face which was distinguished-looking rather than handsome.

'A likeness between Sir Francis and Harcross,' said the solicitor, looking from his son-in-law to the baronet. 'Well, yes,

there may be something of the kind ; but upon my word, I never remarked it until this moment, and I hardly think that Sir Francis will be flattered by the comparison. Harcross looks ten years older than he does—'

'But the likeness is something wonderful, papa. I beg your pardon, Sir Francis, for talking about it, but I was really taken by surprise ; papa ought to have told me—'

'But, my dear, I didn't see the likeness.'

'Then, papa, you can have no eyes.'

'I really feel honoured by being supposed to resemble any one so distinguished as Mr. Harcross,' said Sir Francis good-naturedly.

'Will you introduce me to him, Vallory ?'

Mr. Vallory called his son-in-law, and Hubert Harcross came forward in his most leisurely manner, with that air of deliberation and absent-mindedness which was apt to be so aggravating to the other side in his parliamentary business ; his opponents knowing full well that, after opening a case as if he had forgotten what his brief was about, he would show himself presently a most consummate master of every detail and ramification of the affair in hand. He saluted the baronet with an almost insolent coolness, and went back to the hearth-rug as soon as the introduction was over, leaving his wife and her father and the Davenant party stranded by the ottoman, as on a green-satin island in a Pacific Ocean of velvet pile.

Miss Davenant went down to dinner with Mr. Vallory ; the baronet had the honour of escorting Mrs. Harcross ; the Colonel gave his arm to a washed-out young lady in ringlets, who had been allowed to fill a corner of the table by reason of a fine contralto voice, which was useful as a second to Mrs. Harcross ; and Hubert and Weston straggled in the rear. In so small a party, the conversation to be pleasant should be general ; and happily where Colonel Davenant was there was no lack of talk. He plunged into his father the general's Peninsular experiences before the soup was done with ; retreated gloriously from Corunna with the salmon ; took Badajoz while the whitebait was going round ; and had followed Wellington to his tent at Waterloo by the time the last of the entrées had made its solemn circuit, where he kept that great captain wrapped in a profound slumber on the morning of the decisive battle, while he supplied himself with currant-jelly for his final slice of mutton.

Sir Francis and Augusta Harcross talked to each other a little during this campaign. She expressed herself interested in Georgie. 'Such a sweet face,' and so on—quite the usual style of thing—a condescension which delighted the lover. 'I'm so glad you like her : but everybody does ; she finds friends wherever she goes,' he said. 'You must come down to Clevedon and see us by and by. We mean to be quite settled by the autumn ; we sha'n't take a long

honeymoon; in point of fact, all our life is to be honeymoon; *but* we sha'n't stay away very long, making believe to seclude ourselves from our fellow-men. We want to begin life at home as we mean to go on, a country squire and his wife—no pretence to fashion—easy-going comfortable people, with our friends around us.'

'You will go into Parliament, I suppose?'

'Must I, do you think? Upon my word, I'd rather not; I don't fancy I've any of the necessary qualities for statecraft, and I want to be so much with Georgie. That sort of thing would keep me away from home, you know; for if one goes in for a thing at all, one ought to do it thoroughly.'

'You'll have a house in town, of course?'

'No. When we want to come to London, we can take a furnished house. But we mean to live the best part of the year at Clevedon.'

'Do you think Miss Davenant would like that?'

'I don't think she would like anything else. She has been brought up in the country.'

Mrs. Harcross shuddered. What strange Arcadian notions this young man had! She wondered idly what her own life would be like, if she and Hubert were compelled to live in the country. What would they do with themselves? Would the isolation bring them any nearer together? She could fancy her husband yawning over his newspaper, as he yawned sometimes even now in Mastodon-crescent, with all the pomps and vanities of London at his elbow.

'Young people who are going to be married have such romantic notions,' she said; 'I daresay a year hence we shall hear of your furnishing a house in Mayfair.'

The Colonel had done with Waterloo with the advent of the ice-pudding, from which culminating victory he harked back to Sir Arthur Wellesley and his brother the Marquis in India, and so brought himself to the later period of his personal experiences, into which he warmed with the dessert.

'What a nice person the Colonel must be to live with if he always talks in this style!' Weston remarked aside to Mr. Harcross, when the ladies had retired.

Georgie grew quite confidential with Mrs. Harcross in the back drawing-room, while the contralto lady yawned over a volume of Egyptian photographs, and wondered if the banquets of Thebes were as dull as the dinners of Acropolis-square. Encouraged by Augusta's air of interest, Miss Davenant told her a great deal about 'Frank's' transcendent merits, and about the things they meant to do when they were married. Then there came music; Mrs. Harcross and Miss Parker the contralto sang 'Deh Conte;' Georgie consented shyly to warble one of her lover's favourite ballads, an old song of Haynes Bayley's, set to Sir Henry Bishop's music;

and this, with a little desultory straggling talk in couples and trios, ended the evening's entertainment. Just at the last, Mr. Vallory took the Colonel into a quiet corner of the back drawing-room for a few confidential words.

'I have found you a trustee,' he said. 'My son-in-law, Harcross, has no objection to assume that responsibility, if you and Sir Francis would like him. He's a first-rate man of business, and a highly conscientious fellow.'

'Nothing could be better,' replied the Colonel carelessly, 'if he'll take the trouble.'

'Well, you know, I consider it a duty; Augusta's obligations to my friend, Stephen Harcross, seem to constitute a kind of connection between her and your daughter, and anything she or her husband can do to be useful, you know—'

'So be it,' said the Colonel. 'Of course I don't pretend to deny that I should have been uncommonly glad if old Harcross had taken it into his head to leave his money to my daughter instead of yours; but he didn't, and I bear no malice, and I'm pleased to see Mrs. Harcross take so kindly to Georgie.'

Mrs. Harcross invited the Colonel and his daughter to dinner; she could give them the choice of two days—Tuesday and Thursday in the ensuing week.

'I should like you to come to me on my own day, Thursday, if possible, for I shall have some nice people in the evening,' said Augusta; so the engagement was made for Thursday, Sir Francis being of course included in the invitation. The business of the settlements would be arranged in the Old Jewry in the mean time.

'He is like you, Frank—that Mr. Harcross, I mean,' Georgie said to her lover, as they drove home, 'but not nearly so good-looking; I don't quite like his expression, he has such satirical eyebrows.'

'Rather an off-handed beggar, certainly,' replied Frank, 'but he really has the Clevedon face, and reminds me of some of the old pictures at home. You see Nature can't afford an original pattern for all her children, she must fall into replicas now and then; Mr. Harcross is a decided infringement of the Clevedon copyright.'

## YOUNG AMERICA

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It has been the fashion amongst us for many years past to eulogise everything connected with our *soi-disant* cousins on the other side of the Atlantic. We hear so much of the praiseworthy enterprise, political advancement, social freedom, religion, morality, education, self-abnegation—as evidenced in the abolishment of slavery—as-tounding exertions displayed during, and marvellous ‘recuperative’ qualities evinced after, the memorable monstrous civil war, and the private virtues generally and public prosperity of ‘the great Republic,’ that Englishmen fall down and worship a fictitious fetish of their own creation, as unlike the real Uncle Sam, to those who are personally acquainted with him from every-day association, as chalk is different from cheese.

Of all writers who have visited America, and subsequently detailed their observations in a book form, Dickens and Trollope are the only two who have shown any practical knowledge of the inner workings and realities of what they have attempted to describe. *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *American Notes* might be taken to-morrow for guide-books to the States, though not in the sense that *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* is yet used as an itinerary for Italy, exhibiting so truly as they do the actual amenities of life, popular existence, and peculiar social and political idiosyncrasies of Transatlantic people, that they might have been supposed to have been written yesterday instead of thirty odd years ago. It is true that the great master of humorous fiction issued, after his last speculative reading tour in the western world, a recantation of his original views and opinions; but this was really more owing to his kindly regret at having formerly wounded the sensibilities of those who, on his second visit, welcomed him so cordially to their shores than to any reason for believing his previous estimate of the Americans unfair or untrue. It is a matter of fact, that Mr. Dickens did not in 1868 make any extended observations through the States, as he limited his peregrinations to Boston and New York, and, on the conclusion of his series of readings, at once returned to England; consequently he did not have that opportunity of noticing any alterations that might have happened that he had when he first crossed the water. Besides, he was so differently received and entertained, so hospitably, and without any vulgar show or ostentatious pride, Jonathan having learnt a sharp lesson to treat delicately such a trenchant tool, that it is only natural he should have wished to give some expression to his grateful feelings at the



warmth of his reception, as he himself said when attending the dinner given to him at Delmonico's by the New York Press Club just before his departure. Cordial, well meant, and natural as his explanation was, I still remember hearing many native gentlemen regret at the time that he ever offered this 'apology to the nation,' as the *Herald* called it, at all. They said that it destroyed the sense of that manly outspokenness for which they had always admired Dickens; and, while themselves thoroughly sympathising in the motives that led to its production, they thought, as afterwards proved indeed to be the case, that the multitude would generally put it all down to 'bunkum,' and the nice little sum of ninety thousand dollars that the author was reported to have received for his recitations at Boston and in the Empire City—such was the meanness of his admirers.

Other describers of Transatlantica evince but a very feeble smattering of this subject in comparison with Trollope and the author of *Martin Chuzzlewit*; and the cause of this is obvious enough. What on earth can a tourist of only a few weeks' experience really know of the actual every-day life of a continent embracing thousands of square miles? Yet here we have had doctors of divinity, literary bookmakers, royal marquises, political agitators, and various crotchets-mongers going across the Atlantic, and after a few hours of interviewing and hearsay evidence—for none of them could have afforded more, allowing a proportional period of their time to each class of the community that they sketched—coming back post-haste to publish post-octavo volumes of 'facts' and fancies, which are taken for gospel by that *gobemouche* the British public. The doctor of divinity probably secured a careful collection of theological statistics from his brother clergymen on the other side; but how far is he practically acquainted with the actual spread of religion and the state of public and private morality throughout the States? The literary bookmaker, no doubt, chose his materials from the best sources, and took as fair a view as he could of the one-sided state of the social abnormality which his eloquent pen described so fluently and graphically: those who have investigated the same subject from behind the scenes, as actual actors in the drama which he has painted in such false colours, could give a very different picture of its working, and furnish many horrible and nauseous details of the new Cosmos, which the learned bookmaker has never thought of even touching upon—perhaps he never knew of them! The nobleman has been introduced only to pleasant people, and makes acquaintance only with pleasant phases of physical phenomena and personal peculiarities, of all of which he prattles pleasantly; what does he know of the underground current of national life in the New World? *On lave son linge sale chez-lui*. People are not in the habit of admitting their visitors by the back stairs and the *rez-de-chaussée*, and letting them into the various secrets and miseries of their domestic economy; so the noble marquis

probably learnt as much of Uncle Sam's public and social anatomy as M. Edouard Assolant did of ours, when he lived for a week in Leicester-square and paid one visit to the Exhibition : certainly both talk to as much purpose. As for the political agitators and crotchet-mongers, they have visited America with the set determination beforehand of looking on the Transatlantic branch of their special hobby, whatever it might have been, in the same light in which they regard its twin brother at home ; and having already made up their minds, and mixed when on the other side only in the same clique, and moved in the same grooves as they would have done in England, of course return perfectly satisfied with their convictions, and the manner in which the Americans as a nation—judging them by their petty cliquish standard—carry them out !

It might well be inquired what the advocate of the ballot—deriving his opinions only from what he is told by people who have been informed how he thinks, and are prepared to answer him accordingly—knows about the large number of fictitious votes that are given through its use at every election held in the States. I remember in 1868 there were *eighteen thousand* votes deposited in New York city alone over and above those from the ninety thousand or so regular registered electors ; and yet, in consequence of the system, the bad could not be winnowed from the good. As for the 'secrecy' of the measure, if Messieurs Thomas Hughes, Bernal Osborne, and others, who speak so strongly in its favour, were aware of the open way in which votes are known and bought and sold in all the large cities on the other side of the Atlantic, they would cease to speak of 'the admirable way in which it works in America.' Again, look at the crotchet-mongers, such as the trades-union agents, cotton capitalists, 'levellers,' and total abstainers ; all these honourable persons will not see things in the States but in the one same light with which they are illumined at home. The working man comes back and tells of the triumphs of the nine-hours system ; the capitalist talks of the splendid supply of labour, and the opportunities of employing and investing cash : the one being unaware of the antagonistic feeling that exists over the water between the master and the 'hand,' as here, and how much greater the struggle the son of toil had to wage ere he got what he thought his rights in the 'land of freedom ;' while the man of money never hears anything of the terrorism of working-gangs and the riskiness of certain snug investments out West. Just consider the case of the British shareholders in the Erie railroad, governed as it was by an iniquitous 'ring,' headed by that prince of rogues Fisk, who kept them so long out of their own, and judge whether these nice American openings are not capital sinking funds for English gold.

The levellers, to look at the remaining exemplars of international knowledge, are about the least subsequently 'crowful' of those who



go to America to ventilate their theories or bolster them up, as the case may be ; as they frequently find *their* level where they peradventure expect a more grateful return. Ex-professor Goldwin Smith of Oxford, and now of the Cornell University over the water, could a tale unfold on this score ; he found that he, strange though it be, was a trifle too advanced for the modern Arcadia, and had to draw in his horns under the potent threat of a tar-and-feathering. The teetotalers, on the other hand, return home no wiser than they go abroad. They talk of the efficacy of the movement in the States, and the divine Maine liquor-law, that is supposed to clothe all the eastern portion of the Union in a rosy wreath of sobriety ; ignorant of the fact that Boston, the purest city of this part of the country, could supply you with as many inebriated men any day of the week, in spite of the ostensible prohibition of the liquor traffic, as Glasgow with its temperance hotels, although the great Forbes Mackenzie is believed to have effected the regeneration of the northern burgh by parliamentary enactment. It is from such party-blind men as these that our knowledge of America is usually derived ; and can it be wondered that that knowledge is in nine cases out of ten erroneous, knowing how it is obtained ?

It must be remembered that our Transatlantic cousins are superior to us in one great respect ; they never wash their dirty clothes in public, being always in the habit of showing themselves at their best to strangers. We have a certain class of politicians to whom it seems to be an inborn pleasure to run down everything connected with their country—our mode of government, our national honesty, our social morality ; acting the part of those foul birds who, according to the old adage, ‘soil their own nests.’ An American will, on the contrary, speak the best of all his belongings—small blame to him too, for that matter—and it is the forgetfulness of this fact which leads the travelling John Bull to eulogise to such an extent the mode of life on the other side of the Atlantic. To John inquiring for information, supposing that he will meet with as candid confession as he imparts to foreign visitors at home, Jonathan advances, and, putting his sucking republic in his arms, like a proud parent exhibiting his stalwart first-born to an admiring circle of sympathising friends, says, ‘There’s my country ; now ain’t it a fust-rate country, eh ? Don’t you see what limbs it has got, what a fine development, what powers of future advancement, what wealth, what virtues, what a wonderful country it is in fact, entirely ?’ What answer can John Bull make in return but to acquiesce in all that has been said by his interlocutor, and take in all that he has heard for ‘the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,’ as a witness is rigidly sworn to testify in a court of justice ?

I remember very well what my anticipations of America were before I ever visited the United States. Whether it was through

childish reminiscences of the Pathfinder, Last of the Mohicans, Chingachgook, the Great Big Serpent, or the ill-fated deerslayer Natty Bumppo, who fared so badly in his love-affairs, I know not; but I always had the most wonderful ideas of the great West, and was in every way prepared to look at the country 'of the setting sun' and its people through rose-coloured spectacles. Even on the voyage out my expectations were increased; and I can recollect how an enthusiastic American 'piled on the agony' by telling me, 'Jist wait till you see N' York. Yes, sir, Broadway will astonish you, I guess.' But in spite of wishing to be pleased, after the effect of my first impressions had cleared off, I confess I did not see very much to see or to admire after all. The public enterprise of the country is so dimmed by all absence of public, commercial, and private morality among its citizens, combined with a spirit of narrow-mindedness which is but too apparent in every class of the community, that an Englishman may be said to have his sensibilities grated on more and more each day that he lives there. The United States may be all very well to enjoy a tour through when you have not time to inspect things too closely; but to live there is quite another matter. I do not wish to run the place or its people down; America is a splendid country—for Americans. My observations are not directed by any feelings of ill-will, for I have received over the water as great kindness and courtesy as ever I experienced in my life at home. Still there is a certain *je-ne-sais-quoi* antipathetic sort of feeling, which never makes a thoroughgoing Englishman forget the old country, or be altogether satisfied with the new, not if he might live to the age of Methuselah.

Putting aside the genuine American gentleman—who is as well-educated and well-bred a specimen of humanity as you could meet anywhere on the face of the globe, although rarely to be come across—and taking only the representative middle-class man, who is a fair exponent of the nation as a whole, it may be said that Jonathan is an 'almighty smart,' shrewd, able, unpleasant fellow. What we consider crime and swindling is in America only regarded as rather clever evidence of being 'sharp;' and this explains details that seem almost incredible to English readers in connection with the late exposures of the New York frauds and the Erie ring. A *bonâ-fide* case which an American lawyer told me as a fact, mentioning the names of the parties, and indeed confessing that he was the legal gentleman or 'counsel' consulted in the matter, will illustrate the issue. The lawyer considered it what he called 'sharp practice,' and styled the principal actor in it as 'a live man of business, you bet, sir.'

Not long before, a young New Yorker, who had a minor situation in one of the leading banks in that city, worked himself up by degrees, through his industry and plodding attention, to the position

of chief cashier, when he had the entire control of the bank books and cash, subject only to the occasional supervision of the board of directors. With his rapid rise, this young man's ideas of living expanded proportionately; and Americus junior, as I may call him, determined that, in order to support the dignity of his position, he must follow the example of all fortunate Manhattanese, and have a fine house 'up town,' built of the necessary 'Philadelphia brick,' and with a 'brown-stone front'—the absolute requirements of fashionable architecture in New York. Besides his house up town, he also launched into gay living, took to playing faro—they gamble a little on the other side of the water—started a wagon and pair of 'two-forty' horses, and wound up with marrying a girl who had as lively notions of extravagance as himself. As she naturally thought from his style of life that he was rolling in money, it may be surmised that she ably aided him in his efforts to squander it: she must dress in the height of the fashion, having the most expensive dresses direct from Paris, diamond dust to dress her hair with, and so on; until in a few months the pair were living in the usual Fifth-avenue manner of shoddy millionaires that had just 'struck ile.'

Unfortunately, high living in New York requires even more to support it than in any of the capitals of Europe. The bare salary of Americus junior would not cover a tithe of his expenditure; so, in order not to jeopardise his fashionable position, and lose position in the eyes of the up-town world, he was forced every now and then to 'borrow' a few thousand dollars from the bank till. This went on for some time, until he grew frightened at what he was doing, his conscience being awakened by the fact that the end of the year was near at hand, when the books would have to be balanced and his deficit discovered by the directors.

After thinking over for some time anxiously what he should do, he determined at length to consult his legal adviser—the lawyer who told me the story—making a clean breast of all his defalcations under the seal of confidence.

'What shall I do?' he asked in the greatest perplexity. 'I owe the bank just one hundred thousand dollars, and I haven't a red cent to pay back on account.'

Now this lawyer was wise after the manner of Mammon. Interrogating the young man sharply, and getting all the facts of the case from him, he next asked,

'Have you the sole charge of the books?'

'You bet,' was the answer, in the ordinary vulgate of the Empire City.

'And of the cash also?' inquired the lawyer.

'Yes, sir,' responded our young friend.

'Well, then,' said the legal gentleman, 'you're a thundering fool, but I tell you what to do, if you are only sharp enough to fol-

low my advice. *Go and take another hundred thousand dollars, lodge it in another bank in your own name, and then come back to me. I'll put you up to the next move. Three dollars and a half for my fee. Thank you.'*

Pondering on this strange counsel, Americus junior went on his way despondent ; but after reflecting on it for a bit, and knowing that his adviser was a cautious wary hand at the law, determined to act upon it. He did so, and by next day had the affair all arranged, and returned to the lawyer.

' Well, sir ?' said that worthy.

' I have done as you told me—' commenced the cashier, but the other quickly interrupted him.

' Stop, stop, my friend,' he said ; ' I did not *tell* you to do anything—*suggested* would be a better word.'

' Well, then, if you must have it so,' said Americus junior, ' I have done as you suggested to me. I've taken out another hundred thousand dollars, and lodged 'em in the Fourth National Bank. What am I to do now ?'

' Give me an open cheque for fifty thousand to "bearer." You needn't stare, I don't want it for myself, as I wouldn't touch stolen money ; but give me the cheque, and I'll see your directors, and arrange the matter for you.' After a short hesitancy, which the lawyer's stern stare quickly dispelled, the peccant cashier sat down and wrote the cheque as requested. His adviser took it up, and telling him to come along, went to the bank where the young man was employed. ' Now,' said he to the latter, ' go back to your desk, while I go up to the board-room. I'll send for you presently, and you'll only have to ask pardon, and so on ; they won't do anything to you, you'll see.' Going up to the upper apartment, as he had said, he asked to have an interview with the president of the bank on pressing business, and was instantly admitted. He did not hesitate long over *his* version of the affair.

' So-and-so's your cashier,' he began, ' and I'm his legal adviser : he tells me he has abstracted two hundred thousand dollars from the bank funds ; what will you do to him ?' It may be imagined what consternation was created by this sudden piece of intelligence, but the lawyer was equal to the occasion. ' There's no good making a muss over it,' said he ; ' I think I can get back some of the money for you if you hush it. He has got fifty thousand dollars put away so that you can't touch it ; and if you let him off, and don't arrest him, he'll pay over that at once through me.'

The president deliberated, went back to consult his fellow-directors, had up the cashier to examine him—and you may be sure he did not let out the fact of having increased his borrowing so considerably, at the lawyer's 'suggestion :' the final upshot was, that the offer was accepted, the board of management thinking a quarter

of a loaf was better than no bread, for if they had prosecuted the thief they would probably have got nothing, and in addition have damaged the reputation of the establishment.

'Now,' said the lawyer, when he and his client got outside the building, and the matter was all settled, the cashier only losing his situation in the way of punishment, 'that's all through! I don't want anything for myself, as you have already paid me my fee; so you have got fifty thousand dollars to pay your debts with, and start afresh. I advise you selling off, and going out West; and now good-bye!'

Such is the story told me by a leading professional man in New York; and it affords a very apt example of the commercial morality of Young America, which is very different from that for which his forefathers of the old Independence days were distinguished.

With all his pertinacity in money-getting the modern American is more improvident and reckless than any other national type of character. Middle-class people in the United States will lavish fortunes, which they have perhaps won by the most hair-breadth 'scapes and toilsome industry, in empty ostentatious display, or drinking and gambling. Strange to say, the spendthrifts are not to be found among the youth and upper set of people of the country—one cannot exactly style them the aristocracy—but are chiefly composed of keen business men, who, after working hard all day, and risking almost their salvation to acquire their 'pile,' will cheerfully throw it all away at night over the turn of a card. From senators down to the negroes, everybody in the country gambles,—east, south, west,—faro being the particular vanity of the former class, and cent-lotteries that of the latter.

Young America is fresh enough and enterprising enough, and has plenty of *élan* and go-a-head-itiveness about him; but he is decidedly not a pleasant fellow to ultra-English eyes and Anglo-Saxon sensibilities. He is slangy, unprincipled, selfish, and of bad form altogether: besides which, he has an amount of self-conceit, and fashion of giving himself egotistical airs, that are simply dumb-founding. Beyond this, he is hard, and cold, and ungenial; and, as a nation, he sacrifices every kinder and more heroic feeling which animates the eastern hemisphere in his insensate passion for the tinkle of the almighty dollar, or the rustle of its paper substitute. He is just suited to his own country; and it is an uncommonly good thing for both parties that the ocean rolls between us, as he does not seem to improve with age, and the world will probably soon be not big enough to hold him.

JOHN C. HUTCHESON.



## CONCERNING SPORT

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IN previous articles\* we sketched the origin and progress of fire-arms from the time of Alexander the Great to that of Victoria the Good in the present era. Concomitant with perfection in sporting fire-arms has been the skill of the sportsman. Shooting 'on the wing,' and at running objects, has always been a characteristic of the English. In an Italian work entitled *Excellenza della Caccia de Cesare Solatio Romano*, printed at Rome in 1669, the author states that at the time he wrote, the art of shooting on the wing had been known in Rome about eighty years; so that in Italy sportsmen began to shoot on the wing about 1589. It is natural to suppose that about the same period this practice became pretty general throughout Europe. We are borne out in this inference by a book of great fame in *vénérerie*, called the *Chasses*, or Sports of Stradan, a Nimrod who flourished about the same epoch in France. Among the grotesque representations of sportsmen firing with the arquebus, as set forth in this book, not one is seen aiming at small moving objects. In the French poem entitled *Le Plaisir des Champs*—the Pleasures of the Field—by Claude Gauchet, first printed in 1583, we find several kinds of shooting with the arquebus described, but in none of these does he speak of firing on the wing, although potting coveys of partridges *on the snow* appears to have been considered a legitimate and sportsmanlike pursuit in those days. In shooting animals, however, he cites an instance of knocking over a wild boar *running*, piercing him 'through and through with two impetuous leads.' Another was killed by him firing from a fork or rest; but the animal was standing, as also a roe standing, and some young wild boars in a litter of five with the sow, of which he killed three at once, also a standing shot. Lastly, passing along the edge of a wood, this valiant Nimrod espies 'a wicked Renard' carrying off a leveret to his den; on this our sportsman slipped ahead of the fox, and when he *stopped*, to shoulder his prey the better, pierced him too with 'impetuous leads.' All this reminds us forcibly of a cartoon in *Punch* some years ago, representing an English and French sportsman at a battue, with a pheasant running along the ground close to them. The Frenchman upon observing this, raises his gun to shoot the bird, which so disgusts his companion at the idea of taking an unfair advantage of the game, that he exclaims, 'Hulloa, you're not going to shoot him *running*?' 'No,' replies the French-

\* *Belgravia*, December 1871 and May 1872.

man, 'I vil wait til *he stops*.' It can hardly be supposed, however, that such Cockney ideas represent the state of English efficiency in days of yore. Surely people who could slay the 'gray goose on the wing' in mid air, like Robin Hood and Little John, soon adapted their eyes and fingers to the tube, dealing death and destruction with 'impetuous leads.' Nowadays people load and discharge their breech-loaders so rapidly, that a miss at a near range can—if the sportsman is expert in ejecting his cartridge-case and inserting another—be remedied. A good deal, however, depends on the manufacture of the cartridge-case, and in this respect we consider Kynoch's 'gas-tight' cases superior to any at present manufactured for sporting guns.

The whole aim and object of gunmakers at the present day is to fasten the barrels and stock together *securely*, and for this object many mechanisms have been invented, technically termed breech-actions. Some of these are so complicated as to be utterly worthless, while a few are worthy of note. Foremost in the latter class stands a very popular gun invented by Messrs. Lang and Sons, and now widely known as the 'treble-grip' principle. The old double-grip action is well known to be the strongest of all the methods of fastening breech-loading actions hitherto invented; the reason of its superior strength being, that the moment the cam or grip entered the lump of the barrels, it began to draw or screw the barrels down, and continued to do so till they were firmly secured down, as it were, to the breech, giving the fastening a strength and soundness which could never be attained by any action in which the fastening was effected by a bolt or two bolts going forward into the lump of the barrels, or by moving or in any way interfering with the main or recoil pin.

In their new gun Messrs. Lang do not interfere with the screw motion of the double grip; they merely add a third wedge-shaped bolt, which enters the lump of the barrels at the extreme breech end, where strength is most essential; and over and above the great strength thus afforded to the gun, this bolt, being wedge-shaped, will go farther into the lump as the gun wears, and so serve to keep the double grip in connection with which it works tight and sound for a great length of time; consequently the gun is in reality sounder after ten years' use than when new, as the third bolt by that time wears itself home.

By the addition of an extremely simple spring on the trigger-plate, the gun is made self-closing. With regard to the strength of this spring, Messrs. Lang give us their word that they have never known one to break; but if such ever should be the case, the gun is not made useless, but can be used in the same way as the double-grip gun.

For Express and large-bore rifles, Messrs. Lang add a fourth



fastening to the above, giving a strength to the rifle which has long been necessary. Enormous charges are now the rage, and without great strength in the breech-fastening, the barrels are not only liable, but certain, after some little use, to get loose and shift slightly from right to left, thus destroying all accuracy; and as this looseness is certain to increase, the use of the rifle becomes even dangerous to the shooter. The advantage of a self-closing rifle with great strength will be seen at once by any sportsman who has been accustomed to shooting large and dangerous game.

The lever of the treble-grip gun can be placed where most convenient to the shooter; either between the hammers, at the side of the right lock, under the trigger guard, or in the trigger guard. For rifles, Messrs. Lang recommend the levers under the trigger guard. By a simple contrivance, there being no springs to the strikers, the gun always shows whether it is loaded or not, and it cannot be opened or closed until made safe by being half cocked. They have also a simple method of converting this gun for use as a muzzle-loader in the field, well worthy of the attention of sportsmen.

One of the best breech-loaders in the hands of the public is Powell's well-known gun, selected at the *Field* trial in 1866, upon its merits, and which has since maintained its high character as a simple and secure arrangement for fastening down the barrels of fowling-pieces for discharge, and releasing them by means of a lever for reloading: it is well worthy of the attention of sportsmen. The lever by which the barrels are fastened down turns on a pin or axis, and has a quadrant-shaped end, which, when they are shut, bears forcibly upon the top of the lump between the barrels, and securely holds them down during the discharge of the gun. A spring bears upon the short end of the lever, and forces it towards the barrels. Owing to this admirable arrangement, although the gun is made a 'snap-action' to suit the popular *furor* for quick loading, should the spring by any chance break, the sportsman can continue firing and loading without detriment or inconvenience to himself, the end of the lever keeping the block or lump securely in its place. To reload, the thumb of the right hand—which, after shooting, would be in the proper position for doing so—simply raises the outer end of the lever, when the weight of the barrels causes the breech to rise for loading.

Regarding this breech-action from a common-sense point of view it is both simple and secure, the greatest desiderata in a gun; in fact, there are only two moving parts in the entire system, so that liability to derangement is almost an impossibility, even in the hands of a careless person. Mr. Powell's gun is made on the central-fire system, and by an ingenious arrangement of the pistons, which are marked 'loaded,' a casual glance informs one of the fact whether a cartridge is in the gun or not. The lever action, which we have

already described, renders a premature explosion of the cartridge, either in opening or closing the barrels, simply an impossibility, as it can never come in contact with the strikers. As a durable and lasting 'action' we consider this system of breech-loading sporting guns one of the best for rough work and heavy charges; in addition to these facts, it is important to know that shutting up the breech can never ignite the cartridges, as the mere act of closing it *withdraws* the strikers, hence the name 'safety-action.'

Mr. Turner, who invented the 'Turner rifle,' has produced a very good breech-loader, chiefly remarkable for its simplicity of structure; it is moreover worked by a very handy lever behind the trigger-guard. The lower end of this lever is checkered, for convenient engagement with the finger in pulling it back, as a means of freeing the breech end of the barrels for the insertion of the cartridges.

Mr. Turner's invention applies to the Lefauchaux breech-action now so popular, but records of which, at St. Etienne in France, inform us that Henry II. of that country shot with it as early as 1540. The improvements introduced into Mr. Turner's system, as compared with other 'breech-actions,' refer to the position, means of construction, and actuating of the detent that holds the barrels in place, which consist of a plate lying on the rear or trigger-plate, the wood of the stock being slightly cut away for receiving it. The end of this plate nearest the breech is so formed as to grip the detent, which is held in position by a spring on the inside of the break-off, while the other end of the plate is connected with a small lever working on a fulcrum formed on the inside of the rear plate behind the guard.

The lever works through the sear plate, and lies close in contact with the back part of the guard, its extreme end being shaped for forming a convenient finger-hold for pulling it back, and with it the plate before referred to and detent, so as to free the latter from the corresponding catch placed immediately below the breech end of the barrels, this plate having an opening formed in it for allowing the triggers with their corresponding parts to work free between. The points chiefly worthy of note in this action are its simplicity of construction, and the easy motion of the lever. The bolt for fastening down the barrels is of such construction and length, that the wear and tear is inappreciable after many years' service. We have seen a gun converted from a muzzle-loader on Mr. Turner's system, which, after many seasons' exceptionably severe work and exposure to the weather, is still in perfect order.

Holland, of 'Rook-rifle' notoriety and celebrity, has invented a very good gun, the principal grip or fastening of which is formed by a large square bolt, almost the full length of the action. This bolt works in a wide slot, a quarter of an inch wider than the lump of the barrels, thus preventing any possibility of their muzzles 'droop-

## AT THE STILE

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By the path that gains the height,  
Where the cliffs jag sheer and white,  
Many come and many go,  
'Twixt the glow and after-glow.

And 'tis sweet to rest awhile,  
Lingering at the rustic stile,  
As below the waters lie  
Burning to a burning sky.

So they deem'd it, maidens twain,  
Truest friends, as once again  
They the thymy headland sought,  
One in heart and one in thought.

Who could doubt it? Friends of years,  
One in laughter, one in tears,  
Whatsoever might befall,  
Each to other all in all.

Yet as near the stile they drew,  
Faces darken'd, smiles were few,  
Double-bloom'd their lives had been;  
What was this had come between?

Side by side, with faces bent,  
On the same sweet buds intent;  
Yet apart, as shores might be  
Sunder'd by that burning sea.

Not a word might either speak,  
White of lip and wan of cheek;  
But the colour went and came,  
Changeful in the sunset flame.

For, unwitting, each apart  
Nursed a memory in her heart,  
Sighing, 'Would that he were here,  
He who made the stile so dear!'

But, alas, their prayers were vain;  
He was far across the main,  
Heedless of his plighted troth,  
Plighted at the stile—to both!

WILLIAM SA FYER.



AT THE STILL.

W. A. Cranston, SO.



## A STORY OF A CLAIMANT

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A CLAIMANT! What reminiscences that simple term awakens of involved struggle, wasted wealth, hope deferred and utterly blighted! 'Nae plea is the best plea,' quoth a Scots proverb; for, 'pleading at the law,' adds another, by way of practical illustration, 'is like fechtin' through a whin-bush—the harder the blows, the sairer the scarts;' and yet there is a fascination in the chances of legal contest which some minds cannot resist even in the shadow of impending ruin. The roll of our dormant peerages would be much shorter than it is, if all the parties who have aimed at the revival of such titles in their own persons had made good their assumptions. Now and then pretenders to high lineage are found lending themselves as puppets to be manipulated by unscrupulous speculators. On the other hand, we have seen self-deception, innocent of fraud, but deaf to the warning whispers of common sense, play its melancholy part in this arena. The criminal records of Scotland exhibit, in one memorable instance, how a man of respectable extraction and unblemished character, having obviously contracted a genealogical craze, from some accidental coincidences of family names, gained upon individuals of means, station, and discernment, by the sincerity of his belief in a mere bubble, but, dazzled by the glitter of a coveted coronet, became the blind dupe of mean and maladroit schemers, who led him step by step to the felon's dock. This claimant's story, for the sake of the lesson it teaches, is worthy of being rehearsed in these days.

At the election of a Scottish representative peer in Holyrood Palace, on the 8th of July 1824, Stewart Soutar Johnstone, a citizen of the town of Perth, took his seat and the oaths, as assuming the Marquisate of Annandale, which had fallen dormant by the death of George, third marquis, in 1792. He described himself as descended from a collateral branch, to whose surname of Soutar was added 'their true and ancient name of Johnstone,' by authority of an act of the Scots Parliament, dated the 21st of August 1663. The feasibility of his pretensions enlisted considerable support, and proceedings would have been instituted in the courts, if Death had not stepped in with his arrest.

In the same year which saw Soutar Johnstone assert himself in Holyrood, an English gentleman, Alexander Humphreys, born in Warwickshire in 1784—the son of a Birmingham merchant, William Humphreys, Esq., of the Larches, and Hannah Alexander,



his wife—craved a royal license to adopt the surname of *Alexander*, as being that of his maternal grandfather, stating that he did so ‘as well out of grateful respect to’ the latter’s ‘memory, as out of respect to the wishes oftentimes expressed by his deceased mother.’ The license was granted, and the petitioner, now Alexander Humphreys Alexander, went down to Scotland, where he burst upon the stage in the fashion of his Annandale prototype, from whose example he had evidently taken his cue. He appeared at the election of a Scottish representative peer, on the 2d of June 1825, styling himself Earl of Stirling; and his vote was accepted *nemine contradicente*, and duly entered in the minutes by Sir Walter Scott, clerk of the meeting. The Earldom of Stirling, *per se*, was an empty honour; but when viewed in connection with an old royal grant, the claim to the title meant an attempt to grasp at princely dominion and revenues, as I shall explain with all possible brevity.

A small Scottish laird, William Alexander of Menstrie, Clackmannanshire, born in 1580, rose to fame as a poet, and to exalted rank as a statesman and projector. In 1603 he published *Darius*, a tragedy, at Edinburgh; and next year his *Century of Sonnets*, at London, under the title of *Aurora*; ‘containing the first fancies of the author’s youth.’ Probably he had come early under the eye of King James VI. from the circumstance of his demesne adjoining Stirling, where the monarch occasionally held his state. The natural beauty and pastoral seclusion of the patrimony of the Alexanders, so apt to assist the nurture of a child of the Muses, come up before the mental vision as we recall the popular rhyme:

‘O, Alva woods are bonnie,  
Tillicoultrie hills are fair;  
But when I think o’ the bonnie braes o’ Menstrie,  
It maks my heart aye sair.’

At all events, the youthful dramatist followed his sovereign to England on Queen Elizabeth’s death, like so many of the Scots of that day, whose best prospect was the road to the south. When he gave *Aurora* to the world, he was attached to the household of Prince Henry. Subsequently he was one of the gentlemen-ushers to Prince Charles. The British Solomon, himself ‘a ’prentise in the divine art of poesie,’ praised the laird’s verses, and called him ‘my philosophical poet.’ In truth, Menstrie had a far higher poetic gift than his anointed master; and for a graceful flow, a ‘linked sweetness,’ of language, in giving utterance to the reveries of the gentler passion in all its moods, several of his sonnets fall little behind those of Drummond of Hawthornden. He exemplified his ‘philosophical’ vein by issuing at Edinburgh, in 1614, a bulky poem, *Doomsday; or the Great Day of Judgment*, which passed through two or three editions, being highly esteemed by that sober class of readers whom

his tragedies and love-sick madrigals would repel. Basking in the glare of court sunshine, which warmed into monstrous growth so many fungi to plague and degrade the reign, he received the honour of knighthood, and was appointed a Master of Requests. But amid his poetic and official avocations, he seems, during a course of years, to have been laboriously planning the grand enterprise of his life, namely, the colonisation of Nova Scotia, then lying a waste howling wilderness. 'It did not satisfy him to have a laurel from the Muses, and be a king among poets,' said Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty, the most mercurial and eccentric genius that Scotland ever produced; 'but he must also be a king of some new-found land; and like another Alexander, indeed, searching after new worlds, have the sovereignty of Nova Scotia! He was born a poet, and aimed to be a king; therefore he would have his royal title from King James, who was born a king, and aimed to be a poet.' The king entered so heartily into his propositions as to grant him by charter, in 1621, the whole of that immense territory, to be held under the crown.

The scheme went no farther till Charles I. came to the throne, when he made Sir William Secretary of State for Scotland, and also, on 2d February 1628, confirmed and extended the Nova Scotian charter, creating him lieutenant of the colony, and founding an Order of Baronets to encourage the formation of a settlement. This order was to consist of 130 members, each paying down to the lieutenant the sum of 150*l.* sterling, for 6000 acres of land in Nova Scotia; and the province being declared to pertain to the county of Edinburgh, the ceremony of infeftment in the allocations was directed to take place, by delivery of earth and stone, at the gate of Edinburgh Castle. Two years afterwards, the fortunate knight of Menstrie became a viscount, and in 1633 Earl of Stirling, Viscount Canada, and Lord Tullibody, by letters patent to him and '*his heirs male* for ever, bearing the name and arms of Alexander.' The colonisation project looked well enough on paper, and the council of Plymouth, in New England, added to the grant a large tract (Long Island, &c.) in the State of New York; but, after all, the result was little else than the bringing of a good deal of ready money into the pockets of the lieutenant. From first to last, 122 baronets were dubbed, whose fees, if paid in full, would amount to the handsome total of 18,000*l.* sterling! Moreover, the favourite, in his capacity of Scots Secretary, augmented his perquisites by a monopoly on a portion of the coinage, which he was accused of debasing besides.

After a prosperous career, Lord Stirling died in 1640, leaving seven sons and two daughters. His family derived no farther benefit from the Canadian lieutenancy. The French, pretending that the cession of Acadia by Britain, under the treaty of St.

Germain, in 1682, comprehended Nova Scotia, laid claim to the latter country, and held it till the peace of Utrecht, 1708, when it reverted finally to the British crown; but the rights of the earls of Stirling and the baronets were thenceforth ignored. The fifth and last earl, Henry Alexander, died childless in 1739, and the title lapsed for want of an heir. In 1759, a claim to the peerage was set up by William Alexander, a native of New York, who afterwards served with distinction under Washington; but it soon fell through, and his successor was Humphreys.

The history of Humphreys' youth was strongly tinged with romance. During the short peace of Amiens, his father crossed over to France on business, taking his son along with him; but on the sudden outbreak of hostilities, the luckless merchant was arrested, in common with many of his countrymen, by the vindictive orders of Bonaparte, and remained a prisoner till 1807, when he died. Young Humphreys lived in France till 1814, and married there a Neapolitan lady, with whom he came to England on the restoration of the Bourbons. While at Paris, however, he formed the acquaintance, through his wife, of a certain Mademoiselle le Normand, who had a literary turn, but chiefly derived her subsistence from fortune-telling by cards. This dame, who avowedly 'dealt in destiny's dark counsels,' took him in hand and foretold his future elevation; for which cast of her art he paid her five napoleons. 'You will meet with many toils and distresses,' said she; 'but in the end you will arrive at high honours.' The prediction apparently impressed him; for it was shortly after the decease of his mother, which happened in 1814, that he began throwing out vague hints of his illustrious pedigree; and in the course of the succeeding ten years, the fancy seems to have rooted itself ineradicably in his brain. Having voted at the peers' election of 1825, he set about getting himself 'served,' or declared heir to his mother as 'Countess of Stirling' in her own right. This was a form of procedure in Scottish law practice which, at that period, could be carried successfully through by laying any sort of evidence before a jury of idlers picked at random off the street. The genealogical scheme which he set forth was the following: John, fourth son of the first Earl of Stirling, married the heiress of Gartmore (which was an undoubted fact to begin with), by whom he had a son, John, styled 'of Antrim,' in Ireland, who also left a son, John, afterwards a Presbyterian minister in Dublin, and the father of Hannah Alexander or Humphreys, the *pseudo* countess. Thus the descent stood. But granting its indisputability, the limitation to 'heirs male,' in the original letters patent, excluded the claimant's mother, and consequently himself. He met this objection by asserting that the first earl had obtained another royal charter on 7th December 1689, under the Great Seal of Scotland, which expressly altered the

destination of the title, by allowing the succession of heirs female failing male. The charter, however, was not in his possession; he had never seen it, and he could not tell where it was deposited; but he produced a couple of papers, dated in 1723, certifying its existence at that period. There was nobody present to impeach the story, and although opposition had been offered, the jury (impatient to adjourn with their easily-won fees to the nearest tavern) would not have bothered themselves with it. The 'service' passed 7th February 1826; and the earl *in posse* farther fortified himself by going up the Castle-hill of Edinburgh, and receiving infeftment in his Transatlantic domains.

These legal proceedings, though carrying little weight, tended to give a colourable stability to the claimant's case. But other steps, costing money, were absolutely necessary. Nothing could be done except through the instrumentality of well-paid agents. Humphreys returned to England, and his fame having preceded him, he found the raising of finances no very difficult task. He boldly commenced issuing proclamations and manifestos regarding the sale of land, to emigrants and others, over the vast extent of Nova Scotia, which was now vested in the crown, but to which he, as Earl of Stirling, had prior right, by virtue of the royal grants of the seventeenth century. It will thus be seen that the prize he struggled for with his charters and services was tempting beyond precedent. He dispatched a trusty emissary to America, to explain and vindicate his rights there. This commissioner brought home flattering accounts of his mission, and was next sent to Ireland, where he was so lucky as to fall in with 'an authenticated *excerpt*' of the missing charter of 1639. This important document was mysteriously handed in at the hotel where he was staying in Dublin. The reader may here naturally seek to be informed if there was no trace of the charter in any of the public records of Scotland. There was not. The records had been diligently searched, and strange to say, twelve leaves at the beginning of the 57th vol. of the Register of the Great Seal, including the portion for all the entries of the year 1639, had long been lost. The excerpt, therefore, was the claimant's sheet-anchor. If its genuineness could be legally established, his victory was assured; and he and his backers seemed to think that the game was their own. He was permitted (though under faint protest) to tender his vote in 1830 and 1831, at elections of representative peers; and so, from year to year, things went swimmingly. The money-lenders advanced him altogether 13,000*l.* on his bonds for 50,000*l.* Instead of living, as he had recently done, from hand to mouth, and occasionally skulking about to avoid troublesome creditors, he kept sumptuous style in a London mansion, and eventually opened an office for the transaction of his colonial affairs, though it does not appear that he did any real business in the way



of sale. His nobility was so little questioned in the metropolis that the law courts had already recognised his privilege against arrest. When he paid a visit to the town of Stirling, the event was hailed with public demonstrations, thus gravely recorded in the local newspaper: 'The circumstance of his lordship's arrival was no sooner known to the magistrates than the bells were set a-ringing; and about eleven o'clock to-day they waited on his lordship to congratulate him on his visit to the residence of his noble ancestors.'

To complete the farce, when the Earl of Durham was nominated Governor-General of Canada, the rival lieutenant sent in a formal protest to Government against the appointment, as interfering with his legitimate jurisdiction. Government had hitherto taken no notice of his vagaries, and did not now vouchsafe him any reply.

For the establishment of his title, it was imperative that the claimant should 'prove the tenor,' or contents, of the alleged charter of 1639 before the Supreme Court of Scotland. He commenced an action with that view; but when it had gone a certain length, he suddenly discovered how hollow was the ground on which he trod. The crown lawyers, who had been quietly watching him from the outset, appeared in opposition, and soon raised proceedings on their own part, the object of which was to declare his service as heir to the Earl of Stirling null and void. The contention dragged slowly through three long years; but the crown proving most conclusively that John Alexander, who married the heiress of Gartmore, had only one child, a daughter, the claimant's genealogical superstructure tumbled down in ruins, and on 10th December 1836 the court decided against him.

A wise man would have bowed to the decision and quitted the field for ever. Not so Mr. Humphreys Alexander. He was still ready to clutch at any straw. Within six months after his defeat marvellous revelations came to light, by which he hoped to turn the tables upon his opponents, but which, on the contrary, precipitated the crisis and crash of his fortunes.

In April 1837 a twopenny post-packet, addressed to Messrs. De Porquet & Co., booksellers in London, was delivered at their shop, and on being opened was found to contain a sealed one superscribed 'The Right Hon. the Earl of Stirling,' together with an open note from an unknown Mrs. Innes Smith, desiring that the enclosure should be transmitted to his lordship. One of the claimant's sons being in the habit of calling at this shop, the booksellers delivered the packet into his hands. When the seal was broken, in presence of competent witnesses, an inner parchment packet, closed with three black seals, was disclosed, and also an open anonymous note, declaring that this packet had been purloined, fifty years previously, from the house of the elder Humphreys, near Birmingham, and was now restored by the family of the thief in the selfsame condition in

which it was originally stolen. The three black seals being next removed, several documents appeared, all bearing strong testimony to the claimant's pedigree on those very points which had gone dead against him in December. The principal paper was a genealogical tree, dated 15th April 1759, showing that John of Gartmore had contracted a second marriage with Elizabeth Maxwell of Londonderry, who left the son 'John of Antrim' erroneously attributed to the first wife.

In the end of 1836 the claimant visited Paris, where Mademoiselle le Normand still throve as a sibyl, scattering the leaves of fate. She was now in her seventieth year. Doubtless, if he sought consolation from her occult gifts, she was ready to reanimate his drooping hopes by evoking the old visions of a triumphant future. At a special interview, on the 12th July 1837, she delivered to him a sealed packet which had been left at her door on the previous day! The enclosure in this case was a French map of Canada, dated 1703, on the back of which were written and pasted a variety of 'memorandums,' all corroborating the existence of the missing charter of 1639, all but one dated in 1706 and 1707, and three being autograph of Flechier bishop of Nismes, Fénelon of Cambray, and Louis XV.

The singularity of three packets being flung in at doors in Dublin, London, and Paris might have led a very obtuse man to suspect that he was being made the subject of a series of practical jokes. The claimant, however, saw nothing wrong. He laid the whole documents before the Court of Session. Their appearance was startling; and after a delay of twelve months—occupied, no doubt, by the crown agents in prosecuting inquiries—the court, on the 11th December 1838, ordered his judicial examination, that he might declare how they had come into his hands. He was accordingly examined, when he gave the explanations already stated. In reference to the French packet, he was asked, 'Who he himself suspects to be the person by whom the document had been sent? Declares that he cannot venture to name that person, being of such exalted rank as to make such a declaration on his part unsafe and improper, without positive proof. That he neither can nor dare do more, having only strong suspicion on the subject.' His stories were deemed so unsatisfactory, that in a few days a warrant came out for his arrest on the charge of forgery, and he was taken into custody.

The claimant's apprehension excited public interest to the highest pitch. The trial opened before the High Court of Justiciary in Edinburgh, on the 29th April 1839, and lasted four days. The prisoner gave in a plea of 'not guilty.' He was accompanied to the bar by an old and tried friend, Colonel D'Aguilar, Deputy Adjutant-General of the Forces in Ireland, who remained



with him during the protracted ordeal. The Colonel, in giving evidence as to character, declared that he believed the prisoner innocent and grossly deceived. 'Nothing on earth could induce me to stand where I do, before this court,' he said, from his place at the panel's side, 'if I did not believe Lord Stirling to be incapable of doing a dishonourable action.' To the like effect spoke another friend of many years, Mr. Hardinge, of Bole Hall, near Tamworth: 'If I were to point out a man as remarkable for the strictest honour, I would name Lord Stirling;' and again: 'There is no man in existence more honourable, in my opinion, than he.' Such testimony, coming from such men, must have told with the jury. But the evidence adduced by the prosecution clearly proved the forgery of the main documents; and to avoid perplexing the reader by a multiplicity of details, I shall touch only the leading features.

First, the *excerpt charter*. Twelve leaves of the Great Seal Register of Scotland were a-wanting; but there were other records in which royal charters were usually entered, and these being extant and perfect, had been examined without any discovery of that of 1639. Besides, there was an index in existence, embracing the lost portion of the Great Seal Register, but it contained no notice of such a deed. A memorandum on the map of Canada certified that 'this extraordinary document'—a complete copy of the charter, which the writer professed to have seen—'extends over fifty pages of writing;' whereas, if such was the length of the original, the twelve missing folios of the Register could not have held it. These facts were amply sufficient to show the falsity of the excerpt; but it bore many marks of clumsy fabrication. The charter was dated at Whitehall, 7th December 1639, and witnessed by several high personages, the first being 'John, Archbishop of St. Andrews, Primate and Metropolitan of our Kingdom of Scotland, our Chancellor.' Here was a great historical blunder. Archbishop Spottiswoode resigned the Chancellorship of Scotland on the 13th November 1638, and from that date till 1641 the Great Seal was in commission; but, worse still, the Archbishop himself died on the 26th November 1639, nearly a fortnight before his alleged attendance in Whitehall.

Second, the *Canadian map* and its indorsements. Several French witnesses of eminence declared not only the various notanda to be forged, but that while these chiefly bore the dates of 1706 and 1707, the map on which they appeared, although dated in 1703, was not really published till 1718, by which time Fénelon of Cambray and Flechier of Nismes were in their graves. The discrepancy between the ostensible and actual dates of publication was easily explainable. The map was produced in 1703 by the French geographer De l'Isle, who was appointed *Premier Géographe du*

*Roy* in 1718, which title of honour, as it was inserted in the copy before the court, must have been interpolated in the copper-plate after the appointment. The map had been republished, with the above interpolation, in 1718, but the date of the original publication had been allowed to stand for the purpose of securing the copyright, which, by French law, extended for twenty years from the period of the first issue. The autographs were uncommonly well executed; but it was proof positive against their authenticity (for they all referred to each other) that they could not have been adhibited to a map which was not in existence till 1718. Under this head a Parisian map-seller, M. Leguix, gave the following suggestive evidence :

‘My printshop is in the Quai Voltaire, Paris. I remember, in the winter of 1836-7, a person coming frequently to my shop in search of maps. I think he was an Englishman. The maps he sought for were maps of Canada. He came during the length of five or six weeks. I sold him several maps of Canada. He wished to get one map of a particular date; it was the date of 1703. I sold him a map of 1703; it was procured by me after considerable search. He came to my shop no more after getting that map. It was similar to this; there were no writings then on the back of it. He did not explain who he was, nor say why he wished to have that map; he inquired chiefly for a map of 1703.’

Q. (*By the counsel for the crown.*) ‘Have you seen the prisoner before?’

A. ‘Yes.’

Q. ‘It was not he?’

A. ‘No, sir.’

To all this must be added the very significant fact, that wax-seals on both the London and Paris papers were identical.

Such being the character of the principal documents relied on by the claimant, we need not descend to the less important. The whole formed a farrago of absurdity, which it is surprising that any sane man should have attempted to foist upon a court of law as veritable evidence. The trial, I have said, continued four days, and the panel was ably defended. The jury, after a retirement of five hours, gave in a verdict finding the excerpt charter and the writings on the French map forged; that the alleged forgery of the papers in the London packet was not proven; and that it was not proven that the prisoner had forged the excerpt or the French writings, or that he had uttered them in the knowledge that they were forgeries.

This verdict—virtually one of acquittal—was received with loud cheers by a crowded auditory; and the ‘earl’ fell down in a swoon in the dock.

And so the scene closed on this queer claimant. From the hour in which he left the bar a free man, he disappeared from the

public eye. Perhaps, at the last, amid the woeful wreck of hopes cherished for five-and-twenty years, he saw the groundlessness of pretensions which had been the scourge of his life. But, unquestionably, the funds which he raised on his bonds formed the lure that attracted the artful and designing to practise upon a facile mind prone to hallucination, and constantly brooding on fancied rights and the predictions of the French fortune-teller. The trial, however, which caused a profound sensation, was well calculated to deter other adventurers from pursuing a similar game with similar materials; and the earldom, which carries with it the lieutenancy of Nova Scotia, still lies dormant.

EDMUND S. ROSCOE.

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## AT THE ISLINGTON HORSE-SHOW

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THE English as a nation are particularised for their partiality to strange sights. Uncommon beasts, birds, or fishes are sure to attract their notice, and especially such of them as are of the monstrous kind, or—as Frank Buckland calls them—‘curiosities of natural history.’ This propensity of our countrymen is neatly satirised by Shakespeare in the *Tempest*; where Stephano, seeing Caliban lying upon the stage, and being uncertain whether he was a fish, a beast, or one of the inhabitants of the island, speaks in the following manner: ‘Were I in England now, as once I was, and had this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give me a piece of silver. There would this monster make a man: any strange beast there makes a man. When they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian.’

This propensity is now so well known and acted upon, that on the slightest pretence the marvellous and astonishing, and possibly the dangerous, is imported into every spectacle to which it is requisite to draw public attention. Thus it is that our cattle-shows have become menageries of sightless and shapeless animals, totally unlike any others of the same breed in the world, as by excessive feeding they have been *fattened* up for show. People under ordinary circumstances would not interest themselves in viewing pigs; but upon the assurance that they cannot see for fat, or that they have to be fed by special attendants, off they go to look at them. The horse is an animal intimately connected with English history; and our patron St. George may be seen on the coin of the realm, trying to poke something or other down the throat of what appears to be an infuriated bull-frog, while he himself is securely seated on the back of a horse. When Hugh, the head of the house of the Capets, afterwards monarchs of France, solicited the hand of Edelswitha, the sister of Athelstan, he thought it necessary to send that prince two *equos cursores*, of marvellous speed and rare pedigree, from which we would infer that he knew such a gift would be appreciated by the Anglo-Saxon. Since then horses have played no unimportant part on our English battle-fields, in the chase, and as beasts of burden. It was not, however, for some years that society at large recognised the necessity for giving prizes to breeders of this animal, in order to maintain the excellence of the English equine race.

This necessity for inducing not only breeders of stock, but farmers and others, to do their utmost, by a judicious selection of sires and dams, to insure a vigorous progeny, led to the exhibitions of horses throughout the kingdom now known as Horse Shows.

The annual collection of the equine race at Islington, however, owing to various causes, has attained a magnitude and an importance which is recognised in as great a degree by our country cousins almost as the Cattle Show. Being an eminently practical people, ever ready to combine the *utile* with the *dulce*, it occurred to many that the Islington Horse-Show would be a capital place to dispose of showy screws; and accordingly we find animals sent here in order to compete for prizes of which they never stood a chance; but the owners having carefully ticketed them, 'To be sold,' there they stand in their stalls just as in *any other fair*.

In order, however, to make the 'fair' attractive to the British shilling-spender—a representative of a class who will go anywhere, provided they are not asked to spend any more, and can see something 'spicy' in return for their outlay—prizes for riding and a 'ring' similar to that at Astley's have been instituted; and upon entering the Agricultural Hall we find that in order to look into the arena we must pay five shillings for a seat in the gallery; the entire of the lower part of the building being occupied by a dense rabble, who applaud, crush, and jostle as at a Lord Mayor's Show. But the worst is to come. Carriages, agricultural implements, horse paraphernalia, and various commodities used in stables, and on the farms of stock breeders, are pushed up against the walls in order to make room for—what? Stalls, wherein are exposed for sale, tops, flash jewelry, scent, air balloons, and sweetmeats; anything, in fact, but what appertains to horse-flesh, or the improvement of the breed.

Under such circumstances, we find a stroll of inspection round the building a difficult matter. The heat and the crush is intense, while our nerves are startled by yells of vulgar execration at Miss Spefflin, who, we are informed by a visitor in the garb of a costermonger, 'Ave come to grief over a double 'urdle an' water jump; the said costermonger having his eye applied to a crack in the boarding, jealously erected by the custodians of the five-shilling seats to prevent any one in the exhibition gallery from looking down on the circus. By standing, however, on the steps of Mr. Smith's Perithron, a new invention applicable to phaetons and chariots, we get a glimpse of what is going on in the arena, and are lucky enough to see Miss Dash fly over—our costermonger expressed it 'like a bird'—the dangerous jump at which Miss Spefflin came to grief. While on the step of the Perithron phaeton, we make ourselves acquainted with this, the latest invention in carriage building. Every one knows what annoyance ladies are subjected to in stepping into a phaeton over the wheel, from the mud; not to speak of the danger of restive horses suddenly bounding off and breaking their legs. *Nous avons changé tout cela.* Mr. Smith, by a simple contrivance, enables all nervous people to step up behind their chariots, and, heigh, presto! the seats divide as if by



magic, and upon standing in front to take the reins, close again with equal rapidity. In outward appearance the Perithron much resembles other vehicles of a like class, except perhaps that it is better made and more elegant in appearance. Passing on, we are civilly invited to buy one of Bradford's Jet d'Eau, and if that does not please us we can have either a Hydronette, a Hydrojette—all these are for watering plants—or a Hudorpneuma, insect destroyer. There, too, is the Mor-dova, or egg-decapitator, the old-fashioned way of chipping the egg with a knife having been abandoned for this diminutive machine. Gulliver tells us in his Travels, that the Lilliputians went to war with a neighbouring state because they entertained different opinions as to which end of the egg ought to be decapitated; it will please hair-split-ers to know that this little guillotine does for either end. Truly unless our eyes deceive us Mr. Bradford can lay claim to more useful inventions than any man in England. 'No; we do *not* want either a popgun or a penny whistle.' This to fascinating vendor of toys. Crib-biting is at an end, thought we, as we entered one of Musgrave's iron stalls. We even find iron piggeries and iron dog-kennels by the same firm, and very handsome structures they look; what may be styled light, tight, and airy. Why not make iron villas, Mr. Musgrave, which could be taken to the seaside in the long vacation, and put up in the attic on our return? Tell it not in Gath, but it *has* remained for Pollard, Jephson, and Co. to invent a Louise of Lorne wheelbarrow; while Vincenzo, Count di Tergolina, no doubt from seeing horses running away in the Row, has resuscitated the old Roman bit which Cæsar's charger carried in his mouth, upon setting foot in Britain; a country in which, we are informed in the celebrated *Commentaries*, 'the hen and hare were held sacred.' A change has come o'er the spirit of our dream since then, as we now roast the former, and slaughter the latter in the *battue*. Not having any wine in our cellars, we cannot very usefully carry off one of Benson's portable wine-bins, although they are light enough, being made of iron. When the fifteen hundred coaches used to leave the Elephant and Castle daily, fifty years ago, they were clumsy vehicles enough. In those days hickory and steel played little part in their manufacture; it remained for Mr. Windover of Long-acre to import that notion from our cute Yankee cousins, and the change for the better is manifest in his light carriages, and elegant and spider-like wheels; horses have no longer to drag a mass of wood and iron behind them. Messrs. Bennett and Botwood have improved upon improvers in carriage manufacture by making noiseless wheels; the sooner Mr. Bruce compels all our 'crawlers' to adopt them the better. Not being partial to sausages, we do not want one of Lyons' sausage machines; they suggest unpleasant reminiscences of a tale we heard once about a 'relict' finding a button on her plate, the dear departed having accidentally ground himself into mincemeat;



to look at these machines they seem quite capable of doing it. Here too may be seen a very similar instrument for making provender of a different kind—Richmond and Chandler's chaff-cutting machine, since 1854 it has taken every prize given by the Royal Agricultural Society of England.

Carriages without harness as a concomitant would be like a ship without top gear. Messrs. White and Coleman give us as usual a fine display of that commodity, including their famous tandem tug. Haynes and Sons have recognised the importance of our army, and dedicate the Aldershot cart to their especial use; a prettier trap—to use the vernacular—we never saw. Any one bent on breeding stock ought to have one of the complete stock-breeders' medicine chests exhibited by Messrs. Day, Son, and Hewitt; it is indeed both a *multum in parvo* and a *sine quâ non*. Not caring for either pearls, buttons, brooches, or pocket-books, we turn our attention to fire engines; the change, although startling and brusque, is refreshing and entertaining. Messrs. Shand, Mason, and Co. in their line stand *facile princeps*. The equipment of the fire-engines they exhibit is superb; every large village in England should be provided with such a necessary machine. Landed proprietors, see to this!

Owing to the closeness of the weather we do not feel inclined to invest in Nicholls' garments here exhibited, but it is well known to hunting and shooting men that for wear and tear his leather and flax textures stand unrivalled. For horse clothing Cottam is as eminent as ever; his show of harness is perfection. Colonel Von Hammel startled the public once by inventing a spring horse, that like Mynheer Von Dam's celebrated leg, moved by clockwork and steam, overthrew every one; Mr. Blackwell, however, would have outjockeyed him, having invented a whalebone and gutta-percha jockey; a more ingenious bit of mechanism for training an untractable colt we never saw. Messrs. Morgan of Long-acre exhibit the best carriages in the Show, having taken no less than five gold and silver medals at the various exhibitions in Europe. Messrs. Jolly and Son of Norwich exhibit a remarkably jolly tax-cart, by far the neatest thing in that line we ever saw. The display of carriages generally is very good; Mr. Jas. Bligh maintaining his celebrity for light and elegant work.

In agricultural implements Messrs. Carson and Son supply everything, from a spade to a thrashing machine. These makers have evidently given great attention to the development of this *spécialité*, if we are to judge from the numerous prizes they have taken, and the lightness and strength of their manufacture. Messrs. James as usual come to the front in perfecting the science of agriculture, and have a good show of implements. Mr. Edmund Kerr of Dublin in carriage and stable lamps leaves nothing more to be desired. In garden-chairs, lawn-mowers, &c., Mr. Alfred Peirce makes a grand

display; while Mr. Samuel in garden seats rivals drawing-room furniture in taste and elegance. Mr. Benjamin Edgington's pretty models of tents and marquees, and rick-yards covered with their famous rick-cloths, excited universal admiration.

Sheath Brothers have attained perfection in carriage brushes; they neither scratch the paint off, nor are they too soft to do their work. The St. Pancras Iron-Works exhibit splendid stable fittings, and are justly celebrated for their manufactures in this especial line. In saddlery J. S. Wilton gives a lesson to many London makers, his materials being of a very superior class to those usually employed in this trade. Not far from these we saw some capital garden seats by Messrs. Walter Fox and Co., of a light and pretty design. Not being in want of the preparation, we are invited to have some of Gabriel's tooth-powder, which has a fragrant smell, but is not intended for stable use, being largely in request for ladies' toilets. Elliman's embrocation, now so much in request for the stable, seemed to meet with its just meed, to judge by its ready sale amongst farmers.

It must be apparent to the most casual observer, that the carriages at Islington have it all their own way, 'like the bull in the china-shop;' indeed if it was not for them, there would be little to admire. Bettyes of Long-acre has few rivals in the phaeton class, his work being superb. Corn-bins in days of yore smelt musty: this has been obviated by Mr. Alfred Braby's plan of lining them with slate, which is here exhibited; and he deserves all honour for his invention. More carriages—Gates of Gravesend—*recherché* vehicles, having an air of Rosherville and 'happy days' about them. Inwood, too, displays some handsome manufacture in this line. Mr. Parry exhibits perhaps the most elegant vehicles in England; and Mr. Pearce has evidently had experience in what suits the public taste best, as his carriages are perfection.

Norwich seems prolific in inventors, Mr. Thorn displaying a handsome and complete military canteen. With regard to the horses, a more 'rubbishy lot,' to use a simile of Mrs. Brown's, never were exhibited. Amongst hunters, Pioneer, Landmark, and Brampton Boys stood *facile princeps* in their respective classes. Riding-horses were below par, and park hacks not worth looking at, and driving-horses about the same.

If we are to take the Islington Show as an exhibition of horses, it is a failure, and looks like Tattersall's out of place; as a display of carriages, it is undoubtedly the best we have ever seen. It is to be hoped that some means may be taken next year to keep out Roman-nosed screws, and to induce breeders to exhibit, and not horse-dealers. From what we see at present we may safely predict that in a few years we shall have the *best* carriages in Europe, and the *worst* horses to draw them.

## VINCIT QUI PATITUR

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HOPELESS the task to baffle care,  
Or break through sorrow's thrall !  
To shake thy yoke thou may'st not dare ;  
It would more keenly gall.  
Through life's dark maze a sunnier way  
This tranquil thought insures—  
To know, let Fate do what she may,  
*He conquers who endures !*

Vengeance for any cruel wrong  
Bringeth a dark renown ;  
But fadeless wreaths to him belong  
Who calmly lives it down ;  
Who scorning every mean redress,  
Each recreant art abjures,  
Safe in the noble consciousness,  
*He conquers who endures !*

Who quells a nation's wayward will  
May lord it on a throne ;  
But *he's* a mightier monarch still  
Who vanquisheth his own.  
No frown of Fortune lays him low,  
No treacherous smile allures ;  
King of himself, through weal or woe,  
*He conquers who endures !*

Mark the lone rock that grandly studs  
The melancholy main—  
The raving winds, the foaming floods,  
Burst over it in vain.  
In age majestic as in youth,  
It stands unchanged, secure ;  
Symbol immortal of the truth—  
*They conquer who endure !*

CHARLES J. DUNPHIE

# COLONEL BENYON'S ENTANGLEMENT

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

IN TWO PARTS:—PART I.

## CHAPTER I.

'Thou see'st, we are not all alone unhappy :  
This wide and universal theatre  
Presents more woful pageants than the scene  
Wherein we play in.'

It was late in July when Herbert Benyon, colonel of a Bengal cavalry regiment, landed at Southampton from one of the P. and O. steamers, home from India on sick-leave. The Colonel had been very ill indeed with jungle fever ; very close to the shadowy boundary which divides us from that unknown country, whither we are all journeying with steady footsteps on the separate roads of life. The fresh sea-breezes and idle steamboat life had done a good deal for him, but he still bore the traces of that desperate sickness. The sunburnt face was wan and haggard, and there were lines of premature age about the mouth and dark shadows under the large lustrous gray eyes. Those eyes of Colonel Benyon's had been wont to strike terror to the souls of defaulting soldiers, conscious of a deficiency in the way of pipeclay or a laxity as to drill ; the gray seemed to change to black when the Colonel was angry, and at such times his men were apt to say that their commanding officer looked a very devil. He was not exactly a martinet either, and was known to be as particular about the comfort and well-being of his soldiers as he was about their appearance on parade ; but he was a hard master, and his men feared him.

The Colonel gave a sigh, that was the next thing to a groan, as the express from Southampton slackened its pace at Waterloo. He had a first-class carriage all to himself, and had littered all the seats with an accumulation of newspapers, despatch-boxes, dressing-bags, and such light luggage. He had tramped to and fro the narrow space, like some restless lion in its den, during that rapid journey ; had taken up one newspaper after another, and tossed it aside again with an air of weariness nigh unto death. And now, at the end of his journey, during which he had seemed devoured by impatience, he groaned aloud from very heaviness of spirit.

He was nine-and-thirty years of age, something over six feet in height, broad-shouldered, strong-limbed, and, if not exactly handsome, at least distinguished-looking ; his military career had been one continued success, and the men who knew him best prophesied for him

distinction in the future. He had been eleven years away from England, and had passed through the fiery furnace of the Indian Mutiny, reaping a harvest of laurels from that most bloody field. And now he came home with two years' furlough, a handsome balance at his English bankers', and not a creature in the world with a claim upon his purse or his care.

A more thoroughly independent man than Herbert Benyon never landed upon British soil. He had escaped the rocks and shoals of matrimony by what his brother officers called a fluke. In plain words, he had been jilted at the outset of his career by a high-born and penniless flirt, who had thrown him over at the last moment in favour of a wealthier suitor. In all outward seeming he had borne his disappointment gaily enough ; but from that hour he became as a man hewn out of granite in relation to all womanly fascinations. The prettiest girls in Calcutta, the most dangerous young matrons in the Indian military world, had flashed their brightest glances upon him with no more effect than the rising sun has nowadays upon the head of Memnon. He was one of the best waltzers in English India, and was wont to declare that waltzing was an intellectual exercise ; but in all the giddy mazes of a dozen seasons, Colonel Benyon had never been known to entangle himself. There were women who were said to have been, in the graceful phraseology of the junior officers, 'down any amount of a pit,' or 'up no end of a tree,' on the subject of the Colonel ; but the Colonel himself had never been known to smile upon a woman with anything warmer than the conventional smile demanded of him by society, since the hour when Lady Julia Dursay had written to tell him that she had looked into her own heart, and found that it was better for both of them that they should break an engagement which could never result in happiness to either.

He had taken life pleasantly enough withal, and was eminently popular among his brother officers : a great billiard-player, a most implacable and inscrutable opponent at the whist-table ; and a mighty hunter of those larger animals which enliven the jungle by their existence. He had sent home innumerable tiger-claws mounted in silver, as labels for his English friends' decanters, and had more skins of wild-beasts than he knew what to do with.

Indeed, Herbert Benyon excelled in all those accomplishments which win a man the respect of his fellow-men, and the admiration of the softer sex.

He was rich as well as successful. A bachelor-uncle had died during his absence in the East, leaving him a considerable fortune and a fine old place in the north of Scotland. It would have seemed as if a man could scarcely desire more good things than had fallen to the lot of Herbert Benyon ; and yet the man was not happy. Coming home to familiar scenes after those eleven years of exile awoke



no thrill of rapture in his heart. He had perhaps no enthusiastic affection for the country of his birth ; in any case his return brought him no pleasure, only a gloomy sense of his own isolation.

Near relatives he had none ; neither sister nor brother would smile a welcome upon him : his father and mother had been dead twenty years. He had some distant kindred of course—men and women who bore his name, and professed a certain amount of affection for him ; and he had friends by the score—the people to whom he had sent tiger-claws, and wonderful inlaid boxes lined with sandalwood, and cashmere shawls, and embroidered muslins, and all those treasures of Ind wherewith the wanderer is wont to gratify his acquaintance : but that was all. Amongst all the men he knew there was only one to whose friendly smile and welcoming grasp of the hand he looked forward with any ray of real pleasure.

This was a man of about his own age, a comrade at Eton and Cambridge, a certain Frederick Hammersley, who had begun life as a country curate, and had been spoiled for the church by the inheritance of a comfortable fortune, and the development of views in which his diocesan, a bishop of evangelical tendencies, had recognised a leaning towards Romanism.

Mr. Hammersley had not gone over to Rome, however ; he had contented himself with writing several theological pamphlets setting forth his principles, which were of the most advanced Anglican school, and with doing much good in his immediate neighbourhood. If he were no longer an accredited shepherd, he had not forgotten the divine precept, 'Feed my sheep.'

The last that Colonel Benyon had heard of this friend was the announcement of his marriage. They did not maintain friendship by an interchange of long letters, like a couple of school-girls. Each in his way was fully occupied by the business of life ; and each felt secure of the other's friendship. There was no need of pen-and-ink protestations between men of this stamp.

Yes, there was some pleasure for the Colonel in the thought of meeting Fred Hammersley. He deposited his goods and chattels at the British, in Cockspur-street, and went straight to his friend's club, the respectable Athenæum. The London season was over, and passers-by stared a little at the Colonel's tall figure, with its unmistakable military air. There were some changes in the aspect of things even at this end of the town since those days before the Indian Mutiny, but the Colonel did not take the trouble to notice them ; the Corinthian pillars of a renovated club-house, or a new shop-front here and there, seemed trivial objects to a man fresh from the natural splendours of Cashmere ; or it may be that Herbert Benyon was uninterested in these things for lack of any personal association that went home to his heart. When he came to the Athenæum, where he had eaten many a pleasant dinner with his old



friend, the familiar look of the hall stirred something in his breast that was almost emotion.

He was doomed to encounter a disappointment here. 'Mr. Hammersley was abroad,' the porter told him, 'on the Continent.' The porter could not tell where; 'but he had been absent for a long time; ever since—ever since—last spring was a twelvemonth,' the porter said, pulling himself up, as if he had been about to say something else.

'And his letters,' asked the Colonel—'what becomes of them?'

'We don't get many,' answered the man; 'but any that do come here for him are sent to Coutts's. He's always on the move, they say, and nobody but his bankers knows where to find him.'

There was something in the man's face that impressed Colonel Benyon with the idea that he could say more, if he pleased. He lingered on the threshold of the strangers' room with a dubious meditative air, and slipped half a sovereign into the porter's hand, almost as if from pure absence of mind.

'Thank you, sir; you're very kind, sir. I'm sure I'm sorry enough Mr. Hammersley has left us. It was always a pleasure to do anything for him. Not that he ever gave any trouble—wanting hansoms fetched when it's raining cats and dogs, or anything of that kind. He was always quiet in his ways and affable in his manners. I wish there was more like him. And it do seem a hard thing that he should have to turn his back upon his country like that.'

The Colonel stared at the speaker.

'But he travels for his own pleasure, I suppose?' he exclaimed. 'He had no particular reason for leaving England?'

'Well, yes, sir; there was unpleasant circumstances connected with his going away. Of course at the West-end those things get talked of, and a person in my position can't shut his ears to such reports. I should be the last in the world to talk, but there's nothing going that don't come to my hearing somehow.'

Colonel Benyon stared aghast. What did it mean? Had Frederick Hammersley, that most conscientious and devoted of Anglicans, committed forgery? What was the meaning of this enforced exile? Then a light suddenly flashed on the Colonel's mind.

'His wife is with him, I suppose?' he said interrogatively.

'No, sir; Mrs. Hammersley is not with her husband. In fact his going abroad arose from circumstances connected with that party. She turned out a bad lot, sir. I should be the last to speak disrespectuously of a lady, and of a lady connected with ourselves, as I may say; but I have heard our gentleman say that Mrs. Hammersley's conduct was very bad.'

'She left him, I suppose?'

'Yes, sir; ran away from him, after they'd been married little

better than six months, with a gentleman they say she was engaged to before she kept company with Mr. Hammersley. The marriage was her father's doing, so I've heard; and when this gentleman, who was a captain in the army, came home from India, she ran away with him. They went to Orstend and suchlike places together, and two months afterwards the captain was found dead early one September morning, shot through the heart, on the sands at Blankenburg. There was a great piece of work. Every one thought it was a duel, and that Mr. Hammersley had killed him; but he was supposed to be in London at the time, no one had seen him or heard of him in Belgium, and they never tried to bring it home to him. The matter dropped after a little while. Mr. Hammersley got a divorce soon after, and left England directly his case was decided.'

'And what became of the lady?' asked the Colonel, curious to know the fate of a creature so lost.

'I've never heard, sir. She made no defence in the Divorce Court. It would go rather hard with her, I should think, the captain being dead, unless her friends took her back, which don't seem likely.'

'Poor wretch! Do you remember the man's name?'

'What, the captain, sir? I've heard it times and often. He was a Junior-United gentleman. Let me see—was it Chandos? No. Champney—Captain Champney.'

Colonel Benyon remembered the name, but not the man; he was in a line regiment, altogether an obscure person compared with the dashing colonel of Bengal cavalry. He had not even heard of the scandal connected with the poor fellow's death. He had never been an eager devourer of English newspapers, unless they had some bearing on the politics of martial India; so whatever mention there had been of Champney's death and Hammersley's divorce had escaped him.

He left the Athenæum and strolled into his own club, the Senior United Service, very much cast down. He ordered his dinner; it was growing dusk by this time; and the coffee-room had an empty and even sepulchral look, with lamps glimmering here and there in the twilight, like the religious gloom of some Egyptian temple. Modern architects have a knack of giving an air of Carthage or Babylon to their public dining-rooms.

After dinner the Colonel wrote to his old friend an honest straightforward epistle, touching lightly upon Frederick Hammersley's trouble, but withal full of manly sympathy; not such a flowery missive as the Orestes of a French novel would have addressed to his Pylades under the like circumstances, but a thorough English letter. If Hammersley were within any accessible distance, the Colonel proposed to join him as soon as he was strong enough for the journey.

'I am on leave for my health, and for that alone,' he wrote; 'and I do not see why I should not get well as fast, or perhaps faster abroad than I should in England. I have scarcely an association in this country that I care to renew. I am not even eager to visit that stern old Scottish barrack where you and I once hunted the Caledonian boar or stag, in an autumnal holiday, and which now belongs to me. In short, I have outlived most of the illusions of life, and have nothing left, save a belief in friendship where you are concerned. Let me come, my dear Hammersley, unless solitude is your fixed humour; but do not say yes if inclination says no.'

Colonel Benyon addressed this letter to his friend under cover to Messrs. Coutts; and having done this, he felt almost as if he had no more to do until the wanderer's reply came. The waiters at the United Service told him that London was empty—in a fashionable sense a veritable desert. Yet no doubt there were people he knew to be found in the great city, and there were theatres enough open for his amusement had he cared to visit them; but he had lost his relish for the modern drama fifteen years before; so he went home to the British, read the papers, and drank the weakest decoction of soda-and-brandy until an hour or so after midnight.

He had a little business to transact with his army agent next day, and an interview with a stockbroker in Warnford-court, to whom he intrusted the investment of those moneys which had accumulated during his absence. On the day after he made a round of calls at the houses of his old acquaintances; and had reason to acknowledge the truth of the waiter's assertion as to the barrenness of civilised London. Every one best worth seeing was away. There were two or three business men, who professed themselves the most miserable drudges in the great mill which is always grinding everything into money; here and there in that obscurer region beyond Eaton-square he found a homely matron who lamented her inability to take the dear children to the seaside until Edwin or Augustus should be able to leave that tiresome office in the City, and who seemed unaffectedly rejoiced to see the Colonel; but the choicer spirits among his old circle—the *dessus du panier*—were away yachting off Cowes, or gambling in Germany. Altogether the day was a dreary one. Colonel Benyon was glad to return to the solitude of his hotel and the intellectual refreshment of the evening papers. After this he idled away a week in revisiting such familiar haunts of his early manhood as he cared to see again. The contemplation of them gave him very little pleasure; that one brief letter of Julia Dursay's seemed to have taken all the sunshine out of his nature. There was a settled bitterness in his mind—a sense that outside his profession there was nothing in the world worth living for.

Nearly a fortnight went by before there came any answer from Mr. Hammersley; and the Colonel felt that he could shape no plan for his holiday till he received his friend's reply. The letter came at last—a letter that went to Herbert Benyon's heart; for it told him in a few words how dire a deathblow had shattered his friend's life.

'No, my dear Benyon,' wrote the exile, whose letter was dated from a small town in Norway; 'you must not join me. The day may come, God only knows when, in which I may be fitter for a friend's companionship; but at present I am too miserable a creature to inflict my society upon any one I care for. I have been roughing it in this country for the last six months, and like the fishing, the primitive life, and simple friendly people; but I doubt if such an existence in such a climate as this would suit an Anglo-Indian valetudinarian, even supposing I were decent company. I write in all candour, you see, my dear Benyon, and I do not think you will doubt my regard for you because, under the bitter influence of an affliction which happily few men can measure, I shrink even from your companionship.

'And now I have a proposition to make to you. You are home on sick-leave, you tell me, and really in need of perfect rest. I have a house in the extreme west of Cornwall—a cottage in a garden of roses, within sight of the sea—which I think would suit you to a nicety, if I can persuade you to make your home there for the next few months. The place is full of bitter associations for me, and I doubt if there is another living creature to whom I would offer it; but I shall be heartily glad if you will inhabit a spot that was once very dear to me. The climate is almost equal to Madeira; and if you have any inclination left for that kind of thing, there is plenty of shooting and hunting to be had in the neighbourhood. I have a couple of old servants in charge of the place, to whom I shall write by this post, telling them to hold themselves ready for your reception; so you will have nothing to do but put yourself into the train at Paddington any morning you please, and go straight through to Penjudah, from which station a seven-mile drive will carry you to Trewardell, by which barbarous name my place is known. If you would drop a line to Andrew Johns, Trewardell, near Penjudah, beforehand, to announce your coming, he would meet you at the station with a dogcart. There are a couple of good hacks in the stable, and a hunter I used to ride two years ago, which is, I fancy, about up to your weight.'

The offer was a tempting one, and after some hesitation the Colonel decided upon accepting it. Cornwall was a new country to him—a remote semi-barbarous land, he fancied, still pervaded by the Phoenicians and King Arthur; a land that had been more



civilised two thousand years ago than to-day; a land with which Solomon had had trading relations in the way of metal; a land where, at some unknown period, the children of Israel had worked as slaves in the mines; a land of which one might believe anything and everything, in fact. There was some smack of adventure in the idea of going to take possession of his absent friend's house, some faint flavour of romance in the whole business. It would be dull, of course; but the Colonel liked solitude, and found himself year by year less inclined for the kind of life most people consider pleasant. He might have spent his autumn in half a dozen fine old country houses, and received unlimited petting from their fair inhabitants, if he had desired that kind of thing; but he did not. He only wanted to recover his old health and vigour, and then to go back to India.

He wrote to Mr. Andrew Johns, informing that worthy of the probable time of his arrival; and three days afterwards turned his back upon the great city, and sped away westwards across the fields, where the newly-cut stubble was still bright and yellow, onward through a region where the land was red, then away skirting the edge of the bright blue water, across Isambard Brunel's wonderful bridge at Saltash, and then along a narrow line that flies over deep gorges in the woodland, through a fair and lonely landscape to the little station of Penjudah.

It was dusk in the late summer evening when the traveller heard the barbarous name of the place called out with the unfamiliar Cornish accent by a stalwart Cornish porter. The train, which had been about a quarter of a mile long when it left Paddington, had dwindled to a few carriages, and those were for the most part empty. Penjudah seemed the very end of the world. The perfect quiet of the place almost startled the Colonel as he stood upon the platform, looking round about him in the faint gray evening light. He found himself deep in the heart of a wooded valley, with no sign of human life within sight except the two officials who made up the staff of Penjudah station. There was a balmy odour of pines, and a subdued rustle of leaves lightly stirred by the warm west wind. Among the Indian hills he could scarcely remember a scene more lonely. A rabbit ran down a wooded bank and scudded across the line while he was looking about him. The guard told him afterwards that scores of these vermin might be seen playing about the line at odd times. The trains were not frequent enough to scare them.

Outside the station the Colonel found an elderly man-servant, out of livery, with a smart dogcart and a capital horse.

This was Andrew Johns. He handed the reins to the traveller, and took his seat behind in charge of Colonel Benyon's portman-teaus; and a few minutes afterwards the Colonel was driving up a hilly road that wound across the twilit woods. That seven miles'

drive to Trewardell was all up and down hill. The Colonel had rarely encountered a stiffer road even in the East, but the landscape, dimly seen in that dubious light, seemed to him very beautiful; and he was glad that he had accepted his friend's offer. From the top of one of the hills he caught a glimpse of the distant sea; on the summit of another there was a stretch of commonland, and a tall obelisk that served as a beacon for all the countryside, a monumental tribute to a great Indian soldier.

Something over half an hour brought them into a valley, where there was a church with a square tower surmounted with stone pinnacles, a church of some pretension for a parish which consisted of about half a dozen houses. Close to the church were the gates of Trewardell. They stood open to receive the stranger; and after a winding drive through a shrubbery, the Colonel saw the lighted windows of a long low white-walled cottage half smothered in foliage and flowers.

Mrs. Johns and a fat-faced housemaid were waiting in the hall, and a male hanger-on in corduroy and a stable-jacket was in attendance to receive the horse. Everything within looked bright and homelike; one might have fancied the house in full occupation. The hall was low and wide, with panelled walls painted white, and hung with water-coloured sketches prettily framed. The dining-room was a comfortable square apartment, with light oak furniture of the modern mediæval order, and dark-blue silk hangings. The drawing-room opened out of it, and was more of a boudoir or lady's morning-room than an actual drawing-room. Everywhere, in the dining-room, and even in the entrance-hall, there were books, from ponderous folios (choice editions on elephant-paper) to the daintiest duodecimos in white-vellum binding. There was a brightness and prettiness about everything which the Colonel never remembered to have noticed in any house before. It looked like a home that had been made beautiful by the hands of a lover preparing a bower for his bride.

'A woman must have been hard to please who could not make herself happy here, and with so good a fellow as Fred Hammersley,' he said to himself.

An excellent dinner had been prepared for him, at which repast the versatile Mr. Johns waited, and proved himself an admirable butler. The Colonel asked him a good many questions about the neighbourhood in the course of the meal, to all of which Mr. Johns replied with considerable intelligence; but he uttered no word about his absent master, or of the kind of existence that he had led there in the brief period of his wedded life.

It was ten o'clock when Colonel Benyon had finished dinner, a warm moonlit night; so he went out to explore the gardens and enjoy his evening smoke. It might be very long before any feminine



presence would lend its grace to those bright-looking rooms ; but Herbert Benyon would as soon have thought of committing sacrilege as of desecrating his friend's house with the odour of tobacco. A woman had left the impress of her individuality upon everything. Those water-coloured sketches in the hall were signed by a woman's hand ; in the drawing-room there were caskets and writing-cases, work-baskets and photographic albums—innumerable trifles that were unmistakably a woman's belongings. It seemed as if everything had been religiously preserved exactly as the traitress had left it. Colonel Benyon could fancy her last look round this room, or fancied that he could fancy it. There was a low arm-chair on one side of the fire-place, with a gem of a work-table beside it—her seat, of course. How often had she sat there meditating treason, with her husband sitting opposite to her perhaps, watching her fondly all the while, and thanking God for having given him so sweet a wife !

‘ Confound the woman ! ’ muttered the Colonel impatiently ; ‘ I can't get her out of my mind. ’

It did indeed seem to him to-night as if that false wife had left an evil influence upon the scene of her iniquity. He could not feel at ease in the house ; he could not help wondering and speculating about that lost creature.

‘ Where is she now ? ’ he asked himself ; and then there arose before him an image of her sitting alone in some sordid continental lodging, poor, friendless, desolate ; or worse, flaunting on a Parisian boulevard, in the livery of sin. Do what he would, he could not help thinking of her.

‘ It will wear off in time, I suppose, ’ he said to himself ; ‘ but upon my word, if I were her husband, I could scarcely worry myself more about her. ’

He went out into the gardens, and roamed about amongst the flower-beds, and in the darksome shrubbery-paths, smoking and communing with himself for more than an hour. The grounds of Trewardell were spacious and lovely, quite out of proportion with the humble pretensions of the house. There was a lake on one side of the lawn, on the other a group of fine old plane-trees ; beyond these a short avenue of elms leading to a meadow that looked almost a park. The soft night air was heavy with the perfume of myrtle and magnolia.

‘ The place is a perfect Eden, ’ said the Colonel ; ‘ but I wish I had not been told the history of Eve and the Serpent. ’

## CHAPTER II.

‘ Name her not now, sir ; she's a deadly theme. ’

For the first fortnight of his sojourn at Trewardell, Colonel Benyon's Cornish experiences were altogether agreeable. The wea-

ther was brilliant ; and in a county much given to moisture he was not inconvenienced by a single shower. There was plenty for him to see within a day's ride : here a ruined castle, there a nobleman's seat renowned amongst the show places of the west ; and during those first two weeks the Colonel spent the greater part of every day in the saddle ; or on foot, tramping over sunburnt hills high above a broad sweep of sea, while his horse rested at some solitary rustic inn. He was somewhat inclined to forget how short a time had gone by since he was lying in his Indian bungalow, well-nigh given over by the regimental doctors. Perhaps in that first fortnight of genuine enjoyment he sowed the seeds of a mischief which was to overtake him by and by. The third week brought him into September, and he had a good time of it among the partridges, with Andrew Johns for his guide and counsellor. For three consecutive mornings the two men set out at daybreak when the dew was heavy upon the ground, and tramped over miles of stubble and turnip-field before breakfast. On the fourth day the Colonel suddenly knocked under, and told Mr. Johns that he had had enough, just for the present. Partridge-shooting was all very well in its way ; but there were shooting-pains in the Colonel's limbs, and a dull perpetual aching in the Colonel's shoulders which a man of forty rarely cares to cultivate. There was a drizzling rain, too, upon that fourth day of September ; and Colonel Benyon was very glad to find a blazing fire in the bright-looking drawing-room, wherein he had a knack of painting imaginary scenes—scenes out of that tragical drama of which Flora Hammersley had been the heroine.

In his enforced idleness to-day, the thought of his friend's sorrow, and this woman's sin, haunted him more vividly than ever. That young soldier lying dead in the chill autumn sunrise on the sands near Blankenburg, slain by a hand that had never before been lifted to do a cruel thing—the hand of a generous single-minded man. As to the fact of Fred Hammersley's share in this transaction, Colonel Benyon felt no doubt. His friend had killed the seducer. It was the thing he would have done himself, unhesitatingly, under like circumstances. He walked up and down the room. He had read yesterday's *Times* and *Globe*, *Standard* and *Telegraph*, and there was no more mental pabulum for him till a post came in—per special messenger on pony from the nearest post-town—at five o'clock P.M. At another time Mr. Hammersley's splendid library might have afforded him ample entertainment ; but to-day he was in no humour for books ; he had opened half a dozen or so, and after skimming a page or two absently, had put each volume back on its particular shelf. He could not fasten his mind upon any subject.

The rain came down in a monotonous hopeless way ; even the standard roses on the lawn outside had a dreary look. The Colonel

longed, like Horace Walpole, to bring them indoors and put them by the fire. Sometimes Colonel Benyon stood staring out at the deluged garden; sometimes he threw himself into a low arm-chair by the fire, and amused himself by a savage demolition of the coals; anon he paced the room again, pausing now and then, in an idle way, to examine some one of those womanly trifles whose presence reminded him of the lost mistress of Trewardell.

The day seemed interminable. He was glad when it grew dark; still more glad of the slight distraction afforded by his seven-o'clock dinner, though he had no appetite—an utter distaste for food, indeed—and a burning thirst.

‘I feel very much as I used to feel at the beginning of my fever,’ he said to himself, a little alarmed by these symptoms, and by the heaviness and aching of his limbs. ‘God forbid that I should have another spell of it!’

Andrew Johns had gone to the market-town on business connected with the victualling of the small household; and Mrs. Johns had put on a black-silk gown and her best cap to wait upon the Colonel, not caring to trust that delicate office to the fat-faced rustic handmaiden.

‘The girls we get hereabouts are so rough,’ she said; ‘and this one has never been used to much out of the dairy. We had a houseful of servants when Mr. Hammersley lived here; but since he’s gone abroad there’s been scarcely enough work for me and a girl.’

The dame gave a profound sigh. Colonel Benyon perceived that she was garrulously given, and perceived that if he had a mind to hear about his friend’s history in this house, it would not require any great effort to set Mrs. Johns discoursing thereupon.

‘Do try one of those red mullet, sir; I dressed them with my own hands. It’s a sauce that Mr. Hammersley was fond of—poor dear gentleman!’

Here came another profound sigh; and the dame lingered, trifling absently with the arrangements of the sideboard, as if willing to be questioned.

‘You seem to have been very fond of your master,’ said the Colonel.

‘We shouldn’t be much account if we weren’t fond of him,’ replied Mrs. Johns. ‘He was as good a master as ever lived. We’d known him from a boy, too. He used to come down to Penrose Abbey for his holidays in the old Squire’s time—Mr. Penrose you’ve heard tell of him, I daresay, sir. Andrew and me were butler and cook at Penrose for twenty years. Mr. Hammersley was only a distant relation to the Squire, you see, sir, and nobody thought that he’d come in for all the property; but he did. I suppose Mr. Penrose took a fancy to him when he was a boy; but there were plenty





Edmund R.

H. D. Friston, del.

THE COLONEL INVITES MRS. JOHNS TO STAY AND CONVERSE.

more young nephews and cousins on the look-out for his money, I can tell you.'

'Did Mr. Penrose ever live here?'

'No, sir. Trewardell was his mother's place, and it was shut up after her death. But since Mr. Hammersley came into the estate, the abbey has been kept as a show house. He didn't care to live there: it was cold and gloomy, he said; and he took a fancy to this place, and had it done up against his marriage—a power of money he spent upon it, to be sure. But, dear me, sir, you haven't eat a mouthful of that mullet. Perhaps you don't like the sauce?'

'It's excellent, my dear Mrs. Johns, but I really have no appetite this evening.'

'And there's a boiled fowl with stewed artichokes, and a brace of those birds you shot the day before yesterday. I hope you'll eat something, sir.'

'I'm sorry to do injustice to such good cooking; but upon my word, I can't eat a morsel. If you'll make me a stiffish glass of brandy-and-water, as hot as you can make it, I think perhaps it might do me some good. I had a bad fever in India, and seem to have a touch of my old enemy to-night.'

'Wouldn't you like Andrew to ride back for the doctor, as soon as he comes in? or I could send one of the men at once, sir.'

'On no account. Pray don't make an invalid of me. I walked a little too far after the partridges yesterday; I daresay I've knocked myself up, that's all. Even if I should feel worse, which I don't expect, I've some medicine in my dressing-case.'

Mrs. Johns mixed the brandy-and-water with an anxious face, and watched the Colonel while he drank it. Then she persuaded him to return to the drawing-room, where she ensconced him luxuriously in an easy-chair by the fire, with a tiger-skin carriage-rug over his knees.

'Don't hurry away, Mrs. Johns,' he said, after duly acknowledging her attention. 'I like to hear you talk of my poor friend Hammersley; sit down by the fire, do, there's a good soul. That's right; it looks quite comfortable and homelike to see you sitting there. I could almost fancy I'd discovered some treasure in the way of an aunt. I can't tell you how dreary I've felt all day. My mind has been running perpetually upon poor Hammersley and his wife. It's no use speaking of them to your husband; if I do, he tightens his lips in a most impenetrable way, and is dumb immediately.'

'Yes, sir, that's just like Andrew,' replied the dame, smoothing her white-muslin apron and settling herself comfortably in the chair opposite the Colonel's; 'I think he'd lie down on the ground for his master to walk over him; but you can never get him to talk about him, nor of her either, poor soul!'



'She behaved so badly, and worked such ruin, that I almost wonder you can find it in your heart to pity her,' said the Colonel.

The good woman sighed again, and shook her head dubiously.

'You see, I knew her, sir,' she replied; 'and it isn't likely I could bring myself to think as hardly of her as the rest of the world. She was such a noble generous creature, no one could ever have thought she would do such a wicked thing. She hadn't been here very long before I found out that the love was all on one side in that marriage. She was very gentle and winning in all her ways towards her husband; but she didn't care for him, and never had cared for him and never would; that was plain enough to me. And she was never happy; do what he would to please her, he couldn't make her happy. There was a look in her face of missing something—a sort of haunted look; and whenever her husband was away—though goodness knows that was not often—she would roam about the house in a restless way that gave one the dismal only to watch her.'

'Did he see that she was unhappy, do you think?' asked the Colonel.

'No, sir, I don't think he did; and that's why it came upon him like a thunderclap when she ran away. He was so bent upon making her happy, that I think he believed she was so. He was so proud of her too. Everybody admired her. She was the loveliest woman in the county, they said, though the west is famous for pretty women and she was so clever—such a sweet singer. It was she who painted all the pictures in this room and in the hall. It was Mr. Hammersley's fancy to have none but what she had painted.'

'Did she belong to this part of the country?'

'O dear no, sir. Her family were Suffolk people, I've heard—her father was a colonel in the Indian army, and there was a large family of them—not too well off, I believe; so of course it was a very good match for her. I suppose she married to please her friends; such things seem common enough nowadays. She was always very sweet-spoken and affable with me. One day when I was talking to her of a son of mine—my only child, that died young—she said, "Ah, Mrs. Johns, I have my dead too!" and I fancied she was speaking of some sweetheart very like that she'd had in the past.'

'Did Captain Champney come here as Hammersley's friend?'

'No, sir; he never came to this house at all; she must have met him out of doors. It was summer time, midsummer, and sultry weather. Mr. Hammersley was up in London on business connected with his estate. He was to be away a week at most, but he had wanted her to go with him; but she wouldn't, not being so well or strong at the time. She'd had a low nervous fever in the spring, that had pulled her down a good deal. It was the month after her husband left—I remember it all as well as if it was yet

day—she had been out in the village and round about the lanes visiting the poor—she was a rare hand at that always—and she came in at one of those windows while I was dusting the china in this room. I never shall forget her. Her face was as white as a sheet, and she walked in a strange tottering way, with her eyes fixed, until she came right up against me. Then she gave a start, and dropped into the nearest chair, half fainting. I brought her a glass of water, and asked her what had happened. “O, Mrs. Johns,” she said, “I’ve seen a ghost!” I couldn’t get her to say more than this; all the rest of the day she was shut up in her room. The next day there came a messenger with a letter for her, and late in the afternoon the same man came again with another letter. They were both from the Captain, of course; but all that day she never stirred outside the doors, not so much as to go into the gardens, though it was a splendid summer day. Early the next morning there came another letter, and in the afternoon she went out. She wore her garden-hat and a light muslin dress, and she took nothing with her. I could lay my life that when she left the house that afternoon she had no thought of going away; but she never came back.’

‘Were the two seen together in this neighbourhood?’

‘Yes; a lad met Mrs. Hammersley and a strange gentleman in Farmer Goldman’s field—there’s a short cut across that way to the Penjudah-road—she had her hands clasped over her face, and was sobbing as if her heart would break, the boy said, and the gentleman was talking to her very earnestly. The boy turned and watched them. They loitered about, talking for half an hour or so, Mrs. Hammersley crying almost all the time; and then the boy saw them get into a close carriage that had been waiting in the Penjudah-road, and heard the gentleman tell the man to drive to the station. This was about four o’clock in the afternoon, and the Plymouth train leaves Penjudah at a quarter to five. It came out afterwards that Captain Champney had been staying at the Rose and Crown at Penjudah, and had hired a close fly on that day. The driver could tell all the rest—how he had waited above an hour in the road near Trewardell, and picked up a lady there.’

‘How soon did Hammersley learn what had happened?’

‘My husband telegraphed to him that night, and he was back early the next evening. He was very quiet. I never saw any one take a great blow so quietly. He didn’t bluster or rave, as some gentlemen would have done; but he sat in the library for one whole day, writing letters and seeing every one who had anything to tell him, while Andrew was about making inquiries quietly in every direction. There was no fuss or talk, considering, and it was only a few people knew anything of what had happened. As soon as Mr. Hammersley had heard all he could hear in this place he started off—after those two, I suppose; and that’s the last we ever saw of him.

He wrote to Andrew soon after, telling him how the house was kept up, and so on; and that was all.'

'You heard of Captain Champney's death, I suppose?' said Colonel.

'Yes,' Mrs. Johns replied, with a doubtful air, 'we did hear he was dead.'

'And you heard the strange manner of his death, no doubt'

'We saw something in the papers, but didn't take much heed of it,' replied Mrs. Johns, with an air of not caring to pursue this subject.

The Colonel did not press it. There was no doubt in his mind as to the hand that had slain Captain Champney, and he felt that Mrs. Johns shared his conviction upon that subject.

'Have you ever heard what became of Mrs. Hammersley?' asked presently.

'Not a word, sir. That's what makes me pity her sometimes in spite of myself. It's a hard thing for her to be left like that, without a soul to care for her—him that she sinned for dead and gone. She may be starving somewhere, poor misguided creature! with no roof to cover her perhaps, and these empty rooms looking as if they were waiting for her all the while, with all the pretty things she was so fond of just as she left them. It always gives me the heart to think of her, or to touch any of the things that belonged to her.'

'Was it Hammersley's wish that the place should be kept as she left it?'

'Yes, sir, that was one of his orders in the letter of instruction that he wrote to my husband before he left England.'

'Is there no portrait of her anywhere about the house?'

'No, sir. There was a likeness of her, painted by some artist in London, but I never saw that after the day when Mr. Hammersley came back and found her gone. Whether he destroyed it in secret that day, or put it away somewhere under lock and key, I can't tell. I only know that when I came into this room next morning the picture was gone. There's the blank space where it was, just above your head.'

The Colonel looked up. Yes, there was the empty panel. On the opposite side of the fireplace there was a portrait of his father, little more than a head, against a dark background, bold and full, by the hand of John Philip. He had made a shrewd guess that the companion picture was missing.

He had been so much interested in the housekeeper's talk that he almost forgot his pain and weariness; but by this time the stimulating effect of his dose of brandy-and-water had worn off, and he was really ill, quite as ill as when the first warning of his fever came upon him up the country.

'I'm afraid I'm in for it, Mrs. Johns,' he said, with a faint gasp.

'I'm afraid I'm going to be very ill. Rather hard upon you and your husband, isn't it, and not in the bond? My friend lent me his house to get well in; he didn't bargain for my falling ill in it.'

Mrs. Johns did her best to console and cheer him with assurances that his symptoms indicated nothing more than a cold and a little over-fatigue.

'A cold's a hazardous thing for a man in my condition, my good soul,' said the Colonel, 'and I was a fool to overdo it with those long tramps over the damp stubble.. The doctor who sent me home gave me all manner of solemn warnings as to what I might and might not do, and I'm afraid I've paid very little attention to any of them. However, I'll go to bed at once, take a dose of the fellow's medicine, and wrap myself in a blanket. Perhaps I may be all right in the morning. But if I should be worse, you'd better telegraph to Plymouth for one of the best medical men there. Don't put me in the hands of a local doctor.'

Mrs. Johns promised to obey these instructions, still protesting that the Colonel would be better in the morning; and then hurried off to see that there was a blazing fire made in his bedroom, and to provide one of her thickest blankets in which to envelop him.

### CHAPTER III.

'Ah, homeless as the leaf that winds have blown  
To earth—in this wide world I stand alone.'

THE Colonel's dismal prophecy was but too faithfully realised. The next morning found him in a raging fever, with a furred tongue, bloodshot eyes, a galloping pulse, and racking pains in his limbs. It was no case of infection, no village epidemic. The Colonel had simply, in his own language, overdone it.

Mrs. Johns opined that this was the beginning of a rheumatic fever; but she still kept up her cheery tone to the patient, looking anxiously all the while for the advent of the Plymouth doctor.

He did not come till sunset, by which time the Colonel was worse. After making a careful examination of his patient, and questioning Mrs. Johns closely as to the Colonel's antecedents, the physician sat down to write a prescription.

'It is not so much a question of physic as of care,' he said. 'You have not called in any one from the neighbourhood yet, I suppose?'

'No, sir. Colonel Benyon begged me not to call in any one of that kind, or else I should have sent at once for Mr. Borlase.'

'Never mind what the Colonel says. Let your husband call for Mr. Borlase, and get this prescription made up. He can ask Mr. Borlase to come back with him and see me. Or, let me see, there'll scarcely be time for that. I can call on Borlase as I drive back to



the station, and explain matters. Mr. Borlase will watch the case for me.'

'But you'll come to see him again, sir?'

'Most decidedly. This is Friday. I shall come again on Monday by the same train. The case is rather a critical one.'

'You don't think there's any danger, sir?'

'Not immediate danger; but the man's constitution has been undermined by hard work and illness in India, and he's not a good subject for rheumatic fever. However, I shall be able to say more on Monday. In the mean time, the grand question is good nursing. I think I had better send you a professional nurse.'

Mrs. Johns protested her ability to nurse the Colonel herself; but the physician shook his head.

'My good creature, you have your house to look after,' he said, 'and that poor fellow will want constant watching. We must expect delirium in such a case. You and your husband must contrive to look after him to-night, and I will send you a reliable person early to-morrow morning.'

Having made this promise, the doctor got into the fly from the Rose and Crown, and drove back to Penjudah, where he had a brief interview with Mr. Borlase, who came out of his trim-looking stone house and stood upon the pavement before his door, while the great man talked to him out of the fly.

'I shall send a nurse from Plymouth to-morrow morning,' said the physician. 'There's no one about here, I suppose, that one could depend upon for such a case?'

'I don't know about that,' replied Mr. Borlase. 'There's a person I've had a good deal to do with lately amongst my very poor patients, and if you could only get her, you'd find her a treasure; but whether she would attend a wealthy person as a paid servant is a question I can't answer. She has only nursed the poor hereabouts, and evidently does it as a pious duty. I fancy, from her dress and manner, that she belongs to some religious community—not exactly Roman Catholic perhaps, but very near it.'

'Who is she?'

'A Mrs. Chapman—a widow; poor herself, I suppose, for she occupies very humble lodgings in Bolter's-row, at the other end of the town. She never takes payment from any one; indeed she only attends a class that are quite unable to pay. She is a young woman, fragile-looking, and very pretty; but she is the best nurse I ever met with.'

'I don't think the Colonel will object to her youth and good looks,' said the doctor, laughing. 'That kind of thing is much pleasanter in a sick-room than some gorgon of the Gamp species. Have you known this Mrs. Chapman long?'

'Not long. She has only been here three months; but I have

seen a great deal of her in that time ; and I can answer for her patience and devotion.'

'I've half an hour to spare before my train starts. I'll go down to Bolter's-row, and have a look at this paragon of yours.'

'I'm sure you'll be pleased with her ; but I very much doubt your being able to get her to do what we want,' said Mr. Borlase.

'We'll see about that,' answered the physician, who had some confidence in his own powers of persuasion. 'You say the woman is poor. She'll scarcely care to decline an advantageous offer, I should think. Good-night, Borlase. Be sure you go to Trewardell the first thing to-morrow.'

With this injunction the doctor drove away down the little hilly High-street to the outskirts of Penjudah, where he alighted, and groped his way along a narrow alley of queer old-fashioned cottages, so crooked that they seemed scarcely able to support themselves in a standing position.

Upon inquiring for Mrs. Chapman, he was directed to the last house in Bolter's-row, and here he was ushered into a tiny sitting-room, daintily neat, and with an air of freshness and prettiness that struck him as something beyond the common graces of poverty. The room was dimly lighted by one candle, beside which a woman sat reading ; a slim fragile creature in a black gown and a white-muslin cap of some peculiar fashion, a cap which concealed almost every vestige of her hair, and gave a nunlike aspect to her pale thin face.

The doctor felt at once that this was no vulgar sick-nurse. This was not a woman to whom he could broadly offer money as an inducement to her to depart from her established round of duty.

He told her his errand, told her what he had heard from Mr. Borlase, and how anxious he was to secure her services for a gentleman lying dangerously ill.

'It is quite impossible,' she said, in a sweet firm voice. 'I nurse only the very poor.'

'You belong to some sisterhood, I suppose?' said the physician.

'No ; I belong to no sisterhood,' she answered, with something that was half bitterness, half sorrow in her tone ; 'I stand quite alone in the world.'

'Pray pardon me ; I thought by your dress you might be a member of one of those communities so numerous nowadays.'

'No, sir. It is a simple dress, and suits my circumstances ; that is my only reason for wearing it. I have made my own line of duty, and try to follow it.'

'I wonder you should have chosen so obscure a place as Penjudah as a field for your charitable work. Do you belong to this part of the country?'



'No. The place is quiet, and I can live cheaply here. Up to this time I have always found plenty of work.'

'The duty you have chosen is a very noble one, and the sacrifice most admirable in so young a woman.'

'It is no sacrifice for me,' she answered decisively; and the doctor felt he had no right to ask any more questions.

He pressed his request very warmly, however; so much so, that at last Mrs. Chapman seemed almost inclined to yield.

'You have owned that you have no pressing duties in Penjudah just now,' he said, when they had been talking together for some time; 'and I do assure you that you will be performing a real act of charity in looking after this poor fellow at Trewardell.'

It was the first time he had mentioned the name of the place.

'At Trewardell, did you say?' asked Mrs. Chapman.

'Yes. It's a gentleman's house, seven miles from here; a charming place. This Colonel Benyon is a friend of the owner, who has lived abroad for some years. Pray, now, consider the case, and extend your charity to this poor man, Mrs. Chapman. Remember it's not as if he were in the bosom of his family. He's quite alone, with no one in the house but servants, and a stranger in the land, as one may say. Of course I might send a nurse from Plymouth, as I intended in the first case; but after what Mr. Borlase told me, I set my heart upon having you.'

'Mr. Borlase is very good. I will come.'

He had expected to conquer in the end, but had not expected her to yield so suddenly.

'You will! That's capital; and allow me to say that, as far as remuneration goes, you will be quite at liberty to name your own terms.'

'Pray do not mention that. I could not possibly take payment for my services. I shall come to Colonel Benyon as I should to the poorest patient in Penjudah.'

'Do just what you please, only come; and the sooner the better.'

'I can come immediately—to-night, if you please.'

'I should be very glad if you will do so. I am just off to the station, and will send my fly to take you back to Trewardell.'

'Back to Trewardell!' Mrs. Chapman repeated those three last words as if there were something strange in them.

The doctor was too hurried to notice anything peculiar in her tone. As it was, he ran some risk of losing his train. He wished her good-night, and went back to the fly.

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# THE GREAT INTERNATIONAL DRY-GOODS STORE, SOUTH KENSINGTON

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

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WHEN I was young—it was at the period when the World, too, was juvenile, and Truth was on every shepherd's tongue, and you were not ashamed of sitting outside the little white lodge in the Park, drinking curds-and-whey—in this halcyon season I had a Sweetheart. She was a very nice one; and I was very sorry to hear of her death lately, deeply lamented by her husband and children, at Hobart Town, Tasmania. Yes, I had a sweetheart long ago, when Plancus and Manlius may have been shopboys, little dreaming they would ever come to be consuls; and, as young lovers are apt to do, we quarrelled sometimes. But I knew of an infallible method to restore peace under these circumstances. I used to say: 'Now, look here. If you're not good directly, I'll take you to the Adelaide Gallery to see Mr. Perkins's Steam Gun, and hear Professor Somebody (I forget his name) lecture on the Oxyhydrogen Lamp.' The utterance of this awful threat seldom failed to make of the pretty rebel a truly penitent young woman. She would weep, then she would smile; the end of tears and sunshine combined was naturally a rainbow in the shape of a new bonnet; we would go to dine at Verey's, and to Astley's afterwards, to see Mr. Andrew Ducrow ride six barebacked steeds at once; and, with infinite joy and contentment, we would bid Mr. Perkins's Steam Gun and the Oxyhydrogen Lamp go hang.

I think that if I had a sweetheart now, who was mutinous, or a child who was cross, that I should deal with the mutineer in a manner analogous to that which stood me in such stead in the days when all the world and I were young. The Adelaide Gallery, as a place of *pseudo*-scientific entertainment, exists, it is true, no longer. From a sham kind of Polytechnic it became a Casino, and then a Marionette Theatre, or puppet-show. After that it passed under the sceptre of Mr. Carlo Gatti, of Glacial renown; and then—on the principle of extremes meeting, I suppose—it was burned down. The much-venturing Gatti, however, built up a grand new saloon, all gilding and plate-glass, on the old *emplacement*; and looking in there some few Sunday evenings since, I found about five hundred boys and girls sitting at marble-covered tables, and eating ices as though their stomachs were proof against snowballing. Many of their number (*experto crede*) appeared to be sweethearts,

and to be enjoying themselves amazingly. It was very different in the days when I was conjugating the first tenses of the everlasting verb, and when the bare mention of the Adelaide Gallery, in connection with Mr. Perkins's steam gun and the oxyhydrogen lamp, was sufficient to bring tears to the blue eyes of *my* young woman. How is it that blue-eyed young women are nearly as deceitful as black-orbed ones? It is true that they cannot compete in treachery with the hazel-eyed girls; but, for a thoroughpaced Macchiavelli in petticoats, give me a young person whose eyes are gray.

To resume. To the insubordinate being over whom I had the power to domineer—'tis hard indeed if you cannot tyrannise over somebody: the convict in his cell may bully the blue-bottle that comes buzzing to him through his bars—I would simply say this: 'Sir,' or 'Madam'—as the case might be—'if you do not behave yourself, and if you give me any more of your nonsense, you shall be taken forthwith to an International Exhibition on a shilling day, and put severely through all the sections thereof,—from Raw Materials to Machinery in Motion, from Textile Fabrics to Fine Arts, British and Foreign:

' Tu boiras la coupe,  
M'amie,  
Jusque la lie,  
La lie.'

You shall drain the cup of boredom to the dregs. Nothing shall be spared to you: no, not down to the most trumpery 'annexe'—the hideous word!—devoted to the 'exhibits' of the infant colony of Erewhon. 'Exhibits,' I apprehend, is, as a term, even more repulsive than 'annexe.'

I speak as a victim. I have been the slave of 'Great' and 'International' Exhibitions for one-and-twenty years of my most miserable life. It was in the early days of 1851 that Mr. (now Sir Charles) Fox presented me with a card, bearing the magic inscription, 'Pass Everywhere,' on its face: armed with which talisman, I was privileged to wander over the yet unfinished House of Glass which Joseph Paxton designed in Hyde Park. The Great Exhibition of 1851! We all remember it. We all know its history and its contents by heart; yet how many, I wonder, who read this sheet—I always delight in imagining my readers to be young folk—were alive on that famous First of May, when the Queen and Prince Albert, the little Prince of Wales in a kilt, the little Princess Royal in short skirt, stood under the great *baldacchino* in the nave; Wellington with his white head, Anglesea with that gamest of game legs of his, by the side of the throne; and the Life-Guards trumpeters braying forth the proclamation that the Great Exhibition of 1851 was open. Come hither, little Miss Toddlekins, with your plumed hat and your tasselled boots. Come hither and sit on my

knee, while I tell of the days that will return no more. You are seven, my Toddlekins. I don't mean that there are seven of you in family, but that you still lack three years to make up a decade of years. I am not so very old, my winsome child; but in 1851 I was younger, and I loved. It is not the young woman I menaced with the Adelaide Gallery, the steam gun, and the oxyhydrogen lamp. Never mind the colour of her eyes. I doted on them: that was enough. What appointments we used to make to meet at 8 P.M. at the periphery of Osler's Crystal Fountain in the transept; how we lingered over the model of Gulliver and the Liliputians, and the stuffed specimens of birds, frogs, and mice, playing whist or the *cornet-à-piston*; how we admired the genius of the clerical amateur, who had sent beautiful copies of Rafaele and Michael Angelo scored on a pieboard with a red-hot poker! What merry dinners we used to have—there being no refreshment department worth mentioning in the Exhibition—at Soyer's Symposium! How I adored my partner at the feast!

Why, for my sake at least, could not the Exhibition mania have been brought to a close by the triumphant congress of '51? Alas, from that year, even unto the present one, I have been doomed to wander from Dan to Beersheba, almost incessantly pursued by Exhibitions more or less 'International.' Do not imagine that I purpose to inflict on you the detailed narrative of my experiences in anguish. I have no desire *revocare dolorem*. I only mention that for the better part of a generation I have been doomed to potter about huge bazaars crammed with a heterogeneous assemblage of objects gathered together in all parts of the world, and brought from all parts of the world, and invested with a public and quasi-political character. Emperors, kings, sultans, presidents, queens, grand-dukes, royal highnesses, lords lieutenant, noble lords, worshipful mayors—all these personages, with their multifarious following of courtiers, guards, trumpeters, corporations, and executive committeemen, have I seen and listened to during the performance of the infinitely dreary ceremonial of 'opening' an exhibition. But boredom and *ennui*, but pretentiousness and buncombe, but plenitude of promise combined with poverty of performance, seem to have reached their acme in the show advertised in the daily newspapers now as the 'London' and now as the 'International' Exhibition of 1872. The 'London' is the name of a very capital restaurant in Fleet-street, and the 'International' is the title of a very formidable organisation of working men. So far as my experience extends, the establishment to which I have applied the qualification of a Dry-Goods Store is neither so refreshing as the 'London,' nor so mysteriously interesting as the 'International.' Its claim to be cosmopolitan resolves itself into the fact that its ugly and incommodious galleries contain a quantity of second-rate pictures, bronzes, lace,

and other nicknacks from France and Belgium, and that in a shed apart from the main building are shown a few articles pertaining to the colony of Queensland.

I am bound, however, to admit that the experience I have mentioned is but limited. I have only been twice to the International Dry-Goods Store at South Kensington; and I imagine that it would require a good deal of persuasion to induce me to visit the place a third time. On the first occasion of my presence within the walls I was enabled to see—just nothing at all. The Exhibition Commissioners made known by multitudinous public advertisements that on a given evening the Duke of Edinburgh, the Princess Louise, the Duke of Cambridge, and other *illustrissimi*, would hold a 'reception' in the Albert Hall, and that the picture-galleries of the Exhibition would subsequently be thrown open. There were two ways of procuring an invitation to this royal evening party: first, by being known to Mr. Cole, C.B., or General Scott, or some other personage in authority at South Kensington; and next, by *paying two guineas for a season-ticket which carried with it the privilege of being 'invited' to meet Royalty*. Fancy the Serene and Illustrious House of Brunswick being 'on view'; admission two guineas a head. I didn't pay anything for my card of admission; and under these circumstances you may assume that as an 'invited guest' I had no right to grumble. But I was scarcely 'invited' or a 'guest.' I availed myself of a *tertium quid*. I attended the royal evening party as Mr. Nobody—in the capacity, in good sooth, of a reporter to a newspaper. Tickets for such ceremonials, from 'inaugurations' to hangings, are sent to the newspapers as a matter of course; and their envoy implies neither the desire to be courteous on the one hand, nor the obligation to be grateful on the other. Analogously I have been invited to see the Prince of Wales married, and to see a garrotter flogged in Newgate. I accepted the first, because I thought the pretty sight would do me good, and it did; I declined the latter, because I knew the sight would make me sick; but I am inclined to think that had I stayed away from both spectacles, my presence would have been as little missed by the Lord Chamberlain as it was by Sheriff Bennett.

I have waited upon royal and viceregal people a good many times; but I frankly own that I never saw such a queer evening party as that which I witnessed at South Kensington. The Albert Hall was overcrowded to a scandalous degree; no arrangements, save those of the most blundering kind, were made for the reception or amusement of the company; and when the Duke of Edinburgh and the Royal party arrived, they were so disgracefully mobbed and 'chivied' through the building, that I think they must have been glad enough to run away from their guests, and drive home to a quiet cup of tea and a cigar. As for the picture-galleries, they were,



from the pressure of the crowd, simply impassable. Finally, I must own that there was an abundance of succulent refreshments procurable, *by paying for them*, a condition which, I believe, is not usually exacted at evening parties. You may plead that it would be both silly and extravagant to provide gratuitous tea, ices, and negus, for four or five thousand ladies and gentlemen, nine-tenths of whose number must have been totally unknown to the royal host; yet it strikes me that such a gratuitous provision of refreshments used to be made in the old days of the municipal receptions of the Paris Hôtel de Ville. The plain truth is that H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh was not the host of the evening at all. He was only there as part of the show; and the conductors of the show were fully aware that they would be enabled to sell a great many more season tickets—with an ‘invitation’ as a coupon—if they could make it known by public advertisement that so many royal personages would honour the show with their presence on the evening in question. We are accustomed in this country to run after Royalty, to tread on its heels and stare in its face as though it were a calf with six legs, or a spotted girl; and the most insignificant princekin can be warranted to ‘draw’ a crowded house, when perhaps the exhibition—were it possible—of a Francis Bacon or a William Shakespeare in the flesh might secure but a beggarly account of empty boxes.

So much for my first experience of the International Dry-Goods Store. On the second occasion I determined to ‘do’ the place thoroughly, and endeavour to ascertain whether it contained anything in art or manufacture that could not with as much ease, and without any money payment, be seen any day in the week at the Soho or Crystal-Palace Bazaar in Oxford-street, at an ordinary picture-gallery, or in the shop windows of the City or the West-end. So I paid my shilling at the south-east turnstile in Exhibition-road, and began my explorations without prejudice, having previously provided myself with Mr. Walter Wood’s excellent and compendious *Hand-book and Walk-round Map*, which, at the not inordinate outlay of six-pence sterling, really enables you to see, in the course of a single afternoon, all that is worth seeing in this much-advertised ‘Emporium.’

Well, what, after all, was to be seen? Some French pictures, none of them of the first class; some Belgian and Russian pictures, generally mediocre; a good many English pictures of real merit, but all of which are as familiar as household words to the *habitués* of the Royal Academy; a quantity of cotton in a raw and manufactured state, and in process of manufacture; an inordinate display of coarse pottery, pantiles, and drain-pipes; a couple of big organs; several lots of photographs; some glass cases full of handsome jewelry and goldsmiths’ ware; a number of Indian shawls and Indian dolls; a ‘fish museum,’ of which I have seen better prototypes in the office windows of the *Field* and of *Land and Water*; a vast

stock of pens, ink, paper, pencils, writing-cases, and other articles of stationery, reflecting the highest credit on the trade enterprise and ingenuity of Messrs. Parkins and Gotto, and of Partridge and Cooper, but which those well-known firms do not charge me a shilling for looking at when I visit their establishments at the corner of Rathbone-place and Chancery-lane; a goodly show of pianofortes, brass wind instruments, and big drums; some machinery for making paper, and a Marinoni's press in full blast, printing the fourth edition of the *Echo*, to the wide-mouthed amazement of a mob of country cousins; some workmen making sealing-wax; others making black-lead pencils; others stamping cards; some bronzes, some lace, some crystal-work, and a very small amount of indifferent sculpture; some curtains in coloured paper, shamming the appearance of chintz; a modicum of stained glass, and a trifle of carved-oak furniture. Upon my word this was all.

As to the complaints and the squabbles, the criminations and recriminations, to which the Show has given rise, their name is legion. Everybody remembers the preliminary wrangle, long before the opening of the Exhibition, between General Scott on the one hand, and certain intending exhibitors, who had organised themselves as an association with Mr. Arthur A'Beckett as secretary, on the other. A quantity of dirty linen was washed very unblushingly in public during the continuance of the controversy. It was shown in particular that certain unjustifiable privileges had been granted by the governing body at South Kensington to the French exhibitors in 1871; but in general it was demonstrated, to the great disgust of the public, that the so-called 'International' undertaking (which was 'inaugurated' by the Prince of Wales) had been from beginning to end, not only a show, but a shop, and one entering into very unfair competition with the most enterprising and hardworking tradesmen in London. What tradesman, for example, in Regent-street or Piccadilly, with the heavy rent and taxes, and the numberless concurrent expenses he is called upon to disburse in the conduct of his business, could afford to advertise so extensively and so continuously as the Commissioners of the 'International' are enabled to do? What ordinary tradesman—what extraordinary one, for the matter of that—can afford to add a picture-gallery containing paintings of many thousands of pounds value to the normal attractions of his shop? What silk-mercantile, or jeweller, or haberdasher—save, perhaps, that adventurous spirit at Westbourne-grove—can supplement the popularity of his establishment by setting up a refreshment-room with hot and cold dinners, in his back parlour, or a smoking-room in his garret? What tradesman, in fine, can persuade a Prince of the Blood—attended by Life Guardsmen and halberdiers—there were beefeaters in the Albert Hall in '71, but the repetition of the burlesque was thought to be a little too strong for 1872—to declare

amidst the fanfare of trumpets, that his shop is 'open'? Again, we are entitled to look in a shop window, and at the contents thereof, for as long as we like, for nothing. We are not expected to purchase a season ticket, price two guineas, to privilege us to inspect the stock of Messrs. Gask and Gask or Mr. Peter Robinson; and no shilling admission money is chargeable at the doors of the Oxford-street bazaars of which I spoke above.

The commercial gentlemen (Mr. Arthur A'Beckett secretary) got the best of their preliminary wrangle with General Scott; and the Exhibition Commissioners being at last forced by the pressure of public opinion to do justice, certain concessions were made to the intending exhibitors. These concessions were of a nature seemingly to satisfy the protesting parties; but what advantage accrued to the public at large from the conclusion of a treaty of peace between the belligerents, I have not yet been able to ascertain. It would be erroneous, however, to suppose that the wrangling and the squabbling ceased with the opening of the Great Dry-Goods Store. It was but a few days old as a show, when there broke out that very pretty quarrel between Mr. Streeter, the well-known jeweller in Conduit-street, and the Commissioners, to which publicity in more than one quarter has already been given. The quarrel is still standing, I am told, and the facts, as I gather them, seem to be these. Early in March the Conduit-street jeweller writes to General Scott, saying that he could not get his case of gems ready by the 4th of April (the day fixed for 'sending in'), and requesting a few days' grace. The gallant General replies that the goods must absolutely be delivered by the 4th of April. Repeated representations as to the impossibility of getting jewellers and goldsmiths to work during the Easter holidays only brought about a repetition of the official 'Non possumus,' to the effect that everything must be delivered by the 4th of April; but on the eleventh hour authority relented when Mr. Streeter had intimated his determination not to exhibit; and then he was informed that he might send in his case of jewelry in an unfinished state, and that his workmen would be allowed to complete the fittings within the walls of the Exhibition itself. Subsequently Mr. Streeter found himself called upon to complain of a breach of faith on the part of the Commissioners as regards the delivery of jewelry. He alleges that exhibitors had been allowed to send in their goods long after the day notified as the 'last one' by General Scott; that, in fact, jewelry was received far into May. He declares that the special features in the arrangement of his case—arrangements arrived at only after repeated trials—had been deliberately copied by another eminent firm of jewellers; and that even his tickets, 'thoroughly unique in design,' had been pirated by the *employés* of H.M. Commissioners. Then again, Mr. Streeter has grievances as to breach of contract in the manner of exhibiting his goods; and finally, he protests, in the most energetic manner,

against samples of 'imitation' jewelry being placed in juxtaposition with his own genuine and intrinsically valuable 18-carat gold wares. Other jewellers, he indignantly exclaims, have stipulated that false gems shall not be placed near their own veritable ones 'why should this gross favouritism' (asks Mr. Streeter) 'be shown why should I be attacked personally, and why should my ticket be defaced?' I am sure I don't know. General Scott and the Commissioners and Mr. Streeter must settle the question between them. *Je ne suis pas orfèvre, Monsieur Josse.* I don't wear jewelry; and the war between Scott and Streeter is to me a completely a matter of indifference as the feud between the House of York and Lancaster, or of Capulet and Montague. I only adduce one out of many scandals which have cropped up since the opening of the Great International Dry-Goods Store, to point out how the original Exhibition idea—a very noble and grandiose one for which, so far as this country is concerned, we are certainly indebted to the late Prince Consort—has derogated from its original dignity, and even from what, under ordinary circumstances, is considered to be decency. Is it seemly, is it proper, is it decent, that an officer of the Royal Engineers, that a Major-general in the British army, that a soldier of that distinguished branch of the service to which John Burgoyne belonged, should be placed in such a false position as to bandy red-tape verbiage about jewelry and sale-tickets. What business, after all, have any of the corps of Royal Engineers either at the South Kensington Museum, or at the International Exhibition? *Que diable font ils dans cette galère?* Mr. Cole, C.B. is in his proper place. He was a clerk in the civil service of the government years before he was called upon to preside over the Department of Science and Art. As a dilettante amateur he wrote under the *nom de plume* of 'Felix Summerly,' some very serviceable art handbooks, and in the position he now fills he has done, according to his lights, a considerable amount of service to the public. But surely he might have found scores of civilians ready to his hand—architects, surveyors, artists, retired government clerks, City men or what not—to act under him in his science and art administration and in his 'International' Exhibition management. There must surely enough for the Royal Engineers to do elsewhere. There are bridges, convict prisons, barracks, fortifications, to be built; there are theories of attack and defence in siege operations to be studied and worked out. Were a war to break out to-morrow, or six months or six years hence, Major-general Scott would of course be recalled into active service, and, like a good and gallant soldier, would equal of course be anxious to rush to the front. But would he be more fitted for the distinguished post he would be called upon to occupy by the circumstance that he had spent the best years of his life in planning show-rooms for tradesmen's wares, and wrangling with the tradespeople themselves?



## TRAWLS AND TRAWLERS

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THE 'trawl,' it may be well to inform such of the readers of these pages as may be unacquainted with the term, is a peculiar kind of net largely used for the supply of fish to our great markets, and the 'trawlers' are of course the race of seafaring men who earn a livelihood by this branch of the fishing trade.

When we reflect that hundreds of thousands of tons of fish, representing millions sterling, are annually sold in Billingsgate alone, and that with the exception of cod, herrings, mackerel, pilchard, sprats, and a few turbot and whiting, the whole of such fish are caught by the 'trawl' net, the importance of that apparatus will readily be perceived. It furnishes the entire supply of soles to the rich and middle-classes, and of plaice to the poor, besides brill, turbot, whiting, gurnards, dabs, flounders, John Dories, and an inconceivable variety of other fish.

'Trawling' is carried on all round the British coast, except those parts of it which are rock-bound, for this kind of fishing can only be undertaken on a sandy or muddy bottom. Kent, Sussex, Devonshire, and Yorkshire are perhaps the great trawling counties.

Each boat going to the fishery has a number painted in white or red letters on her bow, and also the initial and final letters of the port to which she belongs. As for example : Dolphin, 64, R.E. (port of Rye) ; Dorothy, 103, N.N. (Newhaven).

Whilst on the subject of ports, a few words respecting the famous 'Cinque Ports' may be interesting, and not out of place. These are, as their name implies, five in number: Sandwich, Hythe, Hastings, Romney, and Dover. They were instituted for purposes of national defence, and were incorporated by charter by Edward the Confessor, but their union was subsequently materially strengthened by William the Conqueror. They are under the special control of a Lord Warden, and the wardens have numbered among them some celebrated men, the great prime minister William Pitt being one of them. The late Lord Palmerston was warden of the Cinque Ports, and he succeeded in that office the 'Iron Duke'—the Duke of Wellington. The present warden is Earl Granville. The official residence of the Lord Warden is Walmer Castle, situated between Deal and Dover; it was built by Henry VIII. in 1539. The Barons of the Cinque Ports had formerly the somewhat peculiar privilege of holding the canopy over the heads of the English sovereigns at their coronation. The privilege was



granted by William the Conqueror, and the sign-manual conferring the distinction farther says: 'On the coronation-day the said Barons of the Cinque Ports shall eat in the king's hall at dinner next unto the king or queen, at the right hand.' On the occasion of the coronation of George III. no special table had been provided for them, and they unanimously refused to accept any other arrangement. The coronation of George IV. was the last in which the Barons of the Cinque Ports took part.

After this brief digression we return to our subject.

The 'trawl' net is a sort of large bag or purse, open at the large end, and tapering down to a fine point (not at all dissimilar in shape to the ends of the old-fashioned silk purses). At the broader end is attached to a long iron-shod beam, the weight of which sinks the net, and to the ends of this beam (called 'trawl-heads') are fastened two ropes, termed the 'bridle,' which by means of a block are in their turn fastened to two larger ropes, called 'warps,' which connect the net with the vessel itself. The net thus prepared is dragged along the bottom of the sea at the rate of perhaps two miles an hour. It is obvious that the 'trawl' can be used only on a very smooth bottom, otherwise the net would be torn to pieces. The fishing vessel whilst her nets are down goes *with* the tide, as all fish swim *head against* stream. Consequently, whilst the trawling boat is going on way, the fish are pushing their way into the net in the opposite direction, and as they *never attempt to turn back with the tide*, every effort only inmeshes them more securely in the trap set for their destruction.

The great bulk of fish thus taken are soles, and were it not for the 'trawl' our London dinner and breakfast tables would remain unfurnished with this popular article of diet. For although on some parts of the coast of Ireland the sole is occasionally taken with line—to which blackthorn splints are affixed instead of hooks—yet these are comparatively few, and the hundreds of thousands of sole weekly sent to the London market are furnished by the 'trawl-net.' The Dover, Calais, and Brixham soles have the reputation of being the best.

Next after the sole, the plaice is taken in vast numbers in the 'trawl,' and the great importance of this fish as an article of food for the poorer classes it is impossible to over-estimate. There is not a street in the poorer localities of London that has not its fish stall, and in the proper season the fish sold at these stalls are mainly plaice. It is common to see a large plaice, sufficient for a good meal for two persons, sold for one penny; and in the hardest time the price of a fine plaice seldom exceeds twopence-halfpenny. Most of the other fish taken by means of the 'trawl-net' we have already enumerated.

The 'trawlers' themselves—that is, the men who carry on the

business of 'trawling'—are, as a rule, a splendid body of men, stalwart, brown-faced, large-limbed fellows, whose very presence seems to bring with it a whiff of the mingled odours of tar and of sea-brine. As a prince is born in the purple, so do these important members of our coast community seem to be bred in the tarry canvas. They are the nucleus from which are supplied our mercantile and our naval services, and it is not too much to say that they are a source of pride and honour to Great Britain. With the 'trawlers' we of course include the life-boat men, the 'hovellers,' the Deal pilots, and our coastmen in general; for all have one common origin, and all have precisely the same habits and predilections. The fisherman, who in summer pursues the comparatively safe calling of supplying fish to our markets, is in winter amongst the bravest of the brave, when 'hands' have to volunteer for the life-boat, or a gallant vessel has to be rescued from peril. At such moments, these brave fellows reckon life and limb as of no account, and they display more real heroism and unselfish devotion than all the battle-fields of the Continent are able to show us. The fishermen are almost without exception massively built and stalwart, and display all the peculiarities of physique of the Saxon race. It is comparatively a rare thing to meet with one of them possessing the darker complexion and lither frame of the Norman. They are bluff, it is true, and to those who do not understand them may appear rude and uncouth; but beneath their rugged exteriors beat warm hearts, and it may be noticed that to a man they are nearly all of them specially fond of and gentle to children. They are extremely primitive and simple in their customs, and as regards their gastronomic tastes, they seem to be entirely agreed from Filey to Land's End. Their favourite dish is boiled pork (or beef) and cabbage, and they one and all commence their dinners with a sort of hard dumpling, without which they seem to think it as impossible for a dinner to be complete as a Londoner would if he were deprived of his potato. It is observable also, that, unlike most adults in towns, they have, 'every man Jack of them,' what is popularly termed 'a sweet tooth,' and cakes and puddings are at a premium with them. They marry early; but from what we have seen of them, in an experience of over twenty years, we should unhesitatingly say that what are termed 'love matches' are rather the exception than the rule. When a young fisherman has turned twenty he has usually a share in a boat, or is otherwise established in life; his thoughts naturally turn to a wife, to 'keep his home comfortable,' and there are always plenty of buxom girls ready to exchange the restraints of their father's roof, or of domestic service, for the independence of a 'house of their own.' A mutual bargain is struck, a mutual regard suffices. No sentiment is looked for or expected on either side; and it is very satisfactory to add that these marriages usually turn out more suitable, and of more lasting happi-

ness, than those previous to which there has been the conventional amount of ' mooning ' and hysterics.

A very large proportion of our coast fishermen have distinguished themselves by saving life at sea, and many of them have been presented with medals for so doing by the various governments whose subjects or fellow-citizens they have aided. Thus, on the occasion of the wreck of the Northern Belle, an American barque, off King gate, on the 5th of January 1857, the Broadstairs life-boat's men and hovellers went off to that unfortunate vessel *three times*, in one of the most terrific hurricanes ever known, and finally succeeded in saving the entire crew, seventeen in number. For this splendid intrepidity (of which we were an eye-witness, and which, we will venture to say, has never been exceeded) these brave men received medals from the American government, besides a large sum of money subscribed for them by the general public. Some of the very men have also medals from the French government. But though we have singled them out for special notice, as having ourselves witnessed their heroic conduct, we know, at the same time, that their brethren all along our coasts would be equally forward, at the risk of their own lives, to prove that our greatest admiral well understood the natural heroism of British sailors when he appealed to them with his soul-stirring signal, ' England expects every man to do his duty ! '

A. H. BALDWIN.

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## THREE TO ONE

Or some Passages out of the Life of Amicia Lady Sweetapple

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'ANNALS OF AN EVENTFUL LIFE'

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### CHAPTER XLVIII. LADY SWEETAPPLE SEES LADY CHARITY, AND HEARS SOMETHING OF EDITH PRICE.

NEXT morning they were all up with the lark, for were they not all going away? We pass over the departure—how Lord Pennyroyal looked noble, and Lady Pennyroyal like an angel; how Count Pantouffles bowed and bowed; how Mr. Beeswing was genial to the last; how glad Colonel and Mrs. Barker were to get back to town; how Mrs. Marjoram had neglected her duties too long; and—though last, not least—how delighted Amicia was that the visit was over, and that she should get back to Lowndes-street and see Harry Fortescue.

The absurd thing was that Florry and Alice were quite sorry to part with her; for as long as she stayed was she not a link between them and their lovers, and when she was gone might she not come between them and the objects of their affection?

'I am so glad she is going,' said Florry to Alice; 'and yet, after all, she can do me less harm here than I know she will in town.'

'Don't fret, darling,' said Alice; 'she will never win Harry Fortescue.'

'O,' said Florry, 'you say that because you feel so safe with Edward.'

'That's because I trust him,' said Alice. 'Why can't you trust Harry in the same way?'

'Ah, if I only could!' said Florry; and then she sighed and sobbed.

'Now do cheer up,' said Alice; 'you know we shall meet them both at Ascot next-week.'

'How do I know that?' said Florry; 'and how do you know it?'

'I heard mamma settle it all with Lady Pennyroyal. We are to go there this day-week for Ascot Races. Won't that be nice?'

'Yes, if my enemy does not get possession of Harry in the mean time,' said Florry sulkily.

So they saw them all off in the break and barouche and brougham, and two carts carried off a mountain of luggage; and then High Beech relapsed into its usual condition, and Mr. Podager had a rest from his labours.

'Such toil,' he said to Mr. Beeswing's valet, as he gave him a glass of port before he went away, 'is fit to make an old servant give warning.'

Amicia reached town before luncheon; and as soon as ever she got to town she sent a message to old Lady Charity, in Eaton-place, to say that she wanted to see her particularly that afternoon, and would call on her between five and six.

Old Lady Charity was a very remarkable woman. She was called old because no one knew how old she was; but, to look at, she might have been as old as Mrs. Methuselah, and older. Her face was all a web of wrinkles like the rind of a melon, her teeth were too faultless to be real, and her eyes were the only features which remained as they had been when she was young. They were preternaturally bright and fine, and though some people compared them to the eyes of a toad, many a woman fifty years younger might have been glad to have such jewels in her head. Lady Charity was not very tall, but she was very limp—she was like a bundle of clothes supported on two mop-sticks, and but for her eyes she would have been nothing. But you could see by them that she was a woman of energy, and yet they were so soft, it was plain that she had the kindest heart. Young people of either sex used to mock at her, and say, 'Charity covered a multitude of sins;' but that was all spite. She had passed through her trials and experiences, and had made up her mind that the world was not so bad as it seemed. The result was, that she was always ready to help those who could not help themselves, out of pure kindness. It cannot be said she had much knowledge of right or wrong, and as for principles, she declared she could never understand them.

'I try to do no wrong myself,' she used to say, 'but I well know how hard it is not to do wrong; and so I really think I sympathise more with sinners than with the virtuous. At any rate, they deserve our pity more.'

And so it was, that while other people were breaking the sinners' heads with their precious balms, or heaping coals of fire on their heads, Lady Charity was ever ready, pouring in oil and wine, and playing the Good Samaritan. No wonder all who were in trouble and affliction respected and adored her, while ladies like Mrs. Marjoram declared openly that she was only holding a candle to a certain personage who shall be nameless.

'If there were no Lady Charities,' said Mrs. Marjoram, 'there would be fewer wicked people in the world.' But then we all know Mrs. Marjoram was one of those people who would have sat side by side by Saul, keeping the clothes of those who were stoning Stephen. It was no wonder, therefore, if she threw stones at Lady Charity, and called her a go-between, and a mischief-maker, and a busybody, and a time-server, and we know not what besides. On



the whole, therefore, it is as well for Lady Charity, and for all the Lady Charities, that the rest of the world of women are not like Mrs. Marjoram.

'Now,' said Amicia, when she had heard that Lady Charity would be very glad to see her between five and six—'now I feel as if I had the ball at my foot. But, first of all, I must find out something about this Edith Price. I think I had better send Crump to find out.'

So Crump was duly summoned, and warned to be cautious, and after she had 'her' dinner, 'which it was that she had waited too long for,' she was to go to No. — Lupus-street, and try and find out something about Miss Price.

'You must not mention my name, you know, Crump,' said Lady Sweetapple. 'I only send you because I take an interest in the young person.'

'Of course, my lady,' said Mrs. Crump—'of course I shall say nothing about you. Shall I try to see the young person, my lady?'

'Yes, by all means, Crump, if you can; and if you see her, you might ask her if she would like a situation in the country, because you think you know a lady who could find her one.'

'Yes, my lady,' said Mrs. Crump; 'I understand it all now.' And down she went to 'her' dinner.

'If I could only get her out of town,' said Amicia, 'and take Harry with me to Ascot, I should breathe more freely. But I do hope Crump will be discreet, and not compromise me in the matter.'

After luncheon Lady Sweetapple ordered her carriage and drove out. We really cannot say how many shops she went to, except that she went to ever so many which she had visited just before she left town. Of course she went to Marshall and Snellgrove's, and Mrs. Brown's, and Mde. Devy's; where else she went we cannot afford time to tell. But she spent two hours in these flights from shop to shop, and then she went to Lady Charity's in Eaton-place.

'O, dear Lady Charity, I am so glad to see you!' said Amicia, running up and embracing the bundle of rags.

'So, my dear, am I to see you,' said Lady Charity. 'And how have you enjoyed the country? I see by your looks that you have been very happy.'

'Not so happy as I wished,' said Amicia sadly. 'Several things happened that put me out very much.'

'And what were they, my dear?' said Lady Charity, handing her a cup of tea.

'It is a very long story,' said Amicia. 'But what should you say if I told you that I met at High Beech my first love?'

'First love!' said Lady Charity; 'why, I should say it was not so pleasant as meeting one's last love.'

‘Yes,’ said Amicia pettishly. ‘But suppose I told you I **m et** there both my first and my last love?’

‘That depends if you were off with your first love,’ said Lady Charity.

‘Of course I was off with him,’ said Amicia. ‘It was years **ago**, you know. But still it was not pleasant.’

‘Of course not,’ said Lady Charity, sipping her tea. ‘Did **any** thing happen?’

‘O dear, no,’ said Lady Sweetapple. ‘No one knew that I **m et** my first love except myself and the first love himself. I stopped **his** mouth very cleverly.’

‘I always knew that you were very clever,’ said Lady Charity. ‘But how did you stop his mouth?’

‘By leading him on, and making him believe I might still be a little in love with him, and that he might love me just a little.’

‘Rather a dangerous game to carry on under the eyes of the **la st** love. How did he take it?’

‘O, very well indeed,’ said Amicia. ‘But, dear Lady Charity, can I confide in you? This last love has a love of his own, and I want to find out all about her.’

‘Is Harry Fortescue in love with Florry Carlton?’ asked Lady Charity. ‘A little bird told me he was as good as engaged to her.’

‘Then a little bird told a great story,’ said Amicia. ‘It’s **all** a mixing up of the two sisters. Edward Vernon is as good as engaged to Alice Carlton, but I am as sure as I sit here that Harry Fortescue is not engaged to Florence Carlton, though of course she would be very glad if he were.’

‘Who, then, is Harry Fortescue’s love of whom you are **so** afraid?’ said Lady Charity, her eyes glistening with desire to **wor k** out this secret.

‘O, nobody — only a young person, not a lady,’ said Amicia; ‘in fact, I hardly know what she is; but her name is Edith Price, and she lives in Lupus-street.’

‘That’s a very odd street for a lady to live in,’ said Lady Charity.

‘Just what I said,’ said Amicia. ‘She can’t be a lady; **but**, for all that, Harry Fortescue writes to her, and she answers him by advertisement in the *Times*.’

‘Let me hear all about it,’ said Lady Charity, pouring **o ut** another cup of tea, which Amicia refused, and Lady Charity drank.

So Amicia told her the whole story; and when it was over Lady Charity said,

‘It sounds very strange, and I cannot tell what to make of **it**. But don’t fret about it. Young men will be young men. And **when** we get Mr. Fortescue down to Ascot, I daresay all will go right.’

‘There, again, is another vexation,’ said Amicia. ‘No soon **er**

**H**ad I arranged with Mr. Fortescue to come to stay with you at Ascot than that stupid Lady Pennyroyal went and asked the Carlton girls to come and stay with her; and as Edward Vernon is devoted to Alice, and Harry Fortescue to Edward, he declares he will not come to us at Ascot unless Edward is asked too, and so I have come to beg you to include him in the invitation.'

'Pray don't say anything about such a trifle,' said Lady Charity. 'Give my compliments to Mr. Vernon, and say that as he and Mr. Fortescue are such bosom friends, I cannot bear to part them, and so I hope he will come to Ascot as well.'

'You are an angel,' said Amicia, giving the wrinkled old face a kiss.

'Rather an old one,' said Lady Charity, 'and most of the feathers have fallen out of my wings; but, for all that, I am still helpful and warm at heart.'

'Of course you are, dear Lady Charity,' said Amicia; 'we all know that.'

And so she sailed away downstairs, and drove home, and waited to hear what Mrs. Crump had to tell her.

She had not to wait long, for as soon as that worthy Abigail had finished 'her' tea, she went upstairs to tell her mistress how her mission had ended.

'Well, Crump,' said Amicia, 'did you find Lupus-street?'

'Yes, my lady, which it is a very low-lived place,' said Mrs. Crump.

'And did you find No. —?'

'Yes, my lady; and I see the landlady, which is a hard-working, industrious woman, as was once a lady's-maid.'

'Indeed, Crump; and what turned her into a lodging-house keeper?'

'Marriage, my lady,' said Mrs. Crump; 'and a very bad marriage too, which it was with a drunken butler out of place, who drinks and robs her of her little ald.'

Pray observe the 'ald,' for it was Mrs. Crump's way of pronouncing 'all.'

'And did you learn all this from the lodging-house keeper herself?' asked Amicia.

'Lord bless us, my lady!' said Mrs. Crump. 'Do you think a wife would go and tell another woman outright, at first sight, as how she had got a drunken good-for-nothing husband? Wives as has been lady's-maids ain't so bad as that. They never speak no harm of their husbands to strangers.'

'How do you know, Crump? You have never been married,' said Amicia.

'No, but I have been as good as married, my lady,' said Mrs. Crump; 'which it was near I was being married before I came to you'

to two drunken butlers, much the same as Mr. Podager, which drunk up my savings before marriage, and all the while I would never have spoken an ill word against them — no, not if they had broken my 'eart.'

'You have been very unfortunate, Crump,' said Lady Sweetapple.

'Yes, I have, my lady,' said Mrs. Crump with great dignity. 'Servants has their feelings as well as mistresses, and there's many a 'eavy 'eart as stands behind a fine lady dressing her back 'air. But let me tell you of No. — Lupus-street.'

'I am most willing to hear,' said Lady Sweetapple; 'only I don't care so much to hear about the landlady as about the lodger. I want to know all about Miss Edith Price. Did you hear anything about her?'

'O yes, my lady,' said Mrs. Crump. 'I 'eard all about her from the greengrocer at the corner as serves the Prices.'

'The Prices!' cried Lady Sweetapple in amazement. 'Why, how many Prices are there, I should like to know?'

'Three, my lady, in family,' said Mrs. Crump; 'which it consists of an old bedridden mother and two daughters — Miss Edith, as is grown up, and Miss Mary, a girl of twelve or so.'

'This is worse than I thought it,' said Amicia, speaking half to herself. 'They seem quite respectable.'

'Yes, my lady, indeed they are. That's what Mr. Leak, the greengrocer, says. A very civil respectable man, who can't help seeing what goes on in his opposite neighbour's house. He said it was a sight to see how lovely Miss Edith looked when she went to church yesterday morning with Mr. Fortescue at her side, and Mr. Vernon walking after them with Miss Mary.'

'Walking to church with Miss Edith only yesterday!' cried Amicia. 'This is worse and worse! How deceitful!'

'Quite what I was thinking, my lady; and I said to myself as how deceit was not confined to butlers or under-butlers, but is found in higher places, where it didn't ought to be. Fancy a handsome young man like Mr. Fortescue leaving the best ladies in the land to run up to town and go to church with a young person from Lupus-street! It's quite shocking!'

'That will do, Crump,' said Amicia faintly; 'I have heard quite enough. Thank you very much for your trouble. When I want you, I will ring.'

So Mrs. Crump withdrew. And as soon as she had left the room Amicia threw herself upon her bed — for this scene was in her bedroom — in an agony of despair.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

## HARRY FORTESCUE CALLS ON EDITH PRICE.

Now, if Mrs. Crump had only waited five minutes longer at the greengrocer's at the corner, in Lupus-street, she would have seen something worth seeing. No less a person than Harry Fortescue walked up to No. — as cool as a cucumber, and quite as fresh and pleasant as cucumbers are in the month of June. What brought him there? We are sorry to say that Harry Fortescue had lain awake all that night tossing and turning, very much as Florry Carlton and Amicia Sweetapple had tossed and turned for his sake. That scarlet fever which so often attacks young men and women was overcoming him. Harry Fortescue was falling in love with Edith Price. Of course he did not know he was falling in love. Love, like death, often gives no warning. Oftener still, love pretends to be something else, the arrant dissembler that he is! That is so like him. He disguises himself like some other disease, puts on a mask, wears false hair, hangs out sham colours, and then, when you come close to him, just to look at him, he pounces on you, and you are his prisoner for life. So it was with Harry Fortescue. According to his own statement, it was something that he had eaten; the night had been so hot, or he had caught cold sleeping with his window open; anything rather than the real cause of his complaint. But all the while he pitied Edith Price. It was a pity such a pretty girl should go out as a governess; it was a pity she should walk out alone; in fact, she was an object of pity from whatever point of view she presented herself to his mind's eye, and we all know how near pity is akin to love. How really bad he was, how far gone, how dangerous the symptoms, may be inferred from the fact that he shunned the society of Edward Vernon, and declared after breakfast that he must go down to chambers and 'work.'

'Work!' said Edward; 'when was it that we last worked?'

'I am sure I don't know,' said Harry; 'but I mean to begin.'

'I am afraid it's too late,' said Edward. 'My working days at least, I hope, are over.'

'And mine are just beginning,' said Harry. 'But work or play, old fellow, just you stay here while I go down to Pump-court and look after my letters. If there are any for you there, I'll bring them back; and if I don't see you in the mean while, remember we dine at the club at eight.'

'All right,' said Edward, who was not sorry to be alone, that he might think of Alice Carlton. He had passed the first season of doubt and distress, and was in that sweet second dreamy state when one is best pleased, if one's love is absent, to sit down and do



nothing but build castles in the air, in which to dwell for ever with her, and her alone.

So Edward sat there for hours, sometimes smoking, but always thinking of Alice Carlton, and making up his mind, only to unmake it that he might remake it, that Alice Carlton was the most charming woman in the whole world.

If only one had watched Harry Fortescue closely, he might have been thought a madman. Sometimes he almost ran, sometimes he walked as slowly as a cat; sometimes he talked to himself, and sometimes he smiled and laughed. This was all the disease coming on. He was very red at heart. Somehow or other he made his way to the Pimlico pier, and got on board the boat. If he had only known that this Bluebell or Daisy was the very boat in which Edith Price had embarked on her voyage of discovery three days before, it would have become as divine a ship to him as Argo. But he knew nothing about it, and so it was only a Bluebell or a Daisy, and the captain no Jason, but John Johnson, who hailed from Wapping when he was not navigating his craft, which was very seldom.

At last he reached Pump-court, and there he saw the same old laundress crawling down, pitcher in hand, whom Edith had seen on the same spot.

There was this difference, however, that Harry knew the laundress and the laundress Harry, and so she stopped instead of crawling on, and made him something like a curtsy on the landing.

‘Anything happened,’ said Harry, ‘since we have been away? Where’s Bowker?’

Bowker, you must know, was the name of their joint clerk, who used to amuse his leisure by taking in law papers to copy for the law stationers, and improved his mind in the evenings by attending the Discussion Forum and Cogers’ Hall. He was a copying clerk by day and a great democratic orator by night, and according to the belief of his friends, and we may add in his own opinion, the real reason why no Tory ministry could stand was because Mr. Bowker denounced that faction in two set speeches every week.

‘When Bowker’s on his legs, them wretched holigarchs shake in their shoes,’ said Mr. Serjeant Buzwing’s clerk.

‘Mr. Bowker,’ said the laundress, ‘is just gone hout to get his dinner. He’ll be back in half an hour,’ she said, rather sardonically, pointing to the paper which still hung out at the letter-slit, telling the same story as had deceived poor Edith Price.

‘It’s rather early for dinner,’ said Harry. ‘It’s only half-past eleven.’

‘Mr. Bowker always haves his dinner early,’ said the laundress. ‘He says it’s good for the woice.’

‘Well, open the door,’ said Harry. ‘It’s lucky I met you, for I have forgotten my key at home.’ Then, as the old bundle of

rag—just as much a bundle as Lady Charity, only Lady Charity's bundle was clean, while that of the laundress was very dirty—opened the door, Harry went on, 'Has any one been here since I was away?'

'Let me see,' said the bundle. 'There's a no one been. O, yes; there was one young woman as came last Friday as ever was, and wanted me to open the door, that she might find out your haddress.'

'And of course you let her in?' said Harry eagerly.

'Of course I did nothing of the sort,' said the bundle. 'I knows my duty better. The Honourable Society would a soon 'ave bundled me out, if so be I let any young women into the chambers which belong to me. No, Mr. Fortescue, I did not let her in, but I told her she might get your haddress at the club, or at your lodgings, and so she walked off. She seemed very tired, and a'most fainting for food.'

'Did you offer her any?'

'O dear, no,' said the bundle. 'I had had my dinner when she came, and it was too soon for tea. Besides, I know my place too well to give tea to strange persons.'

'And where was Bowker?'

'Mr. Bowker had gone out, like as it might be now, to get his dinner. He's wery regular in his habits, is Mr. Bowker. He had gone out, and the paper said, as it says now, "Return in half an hour."'

'I believe he's always out,' said Harry, 'and always returning in half an hour, like his masters,' as he went in and shut the door on the bundle.

Of course Harry found no letters worth taking away. There were no briefs, no bills even, a circular or two, and a threatening notice from the Bench, that unless he and Edward Vernon paid up their arrears their names would be screened in hall, or something dreadful of the kind. For the rest, there was nothing but dust in the chambers, and altogether the aspect of the rooms was anything but cheerful.

'I don't think there's so much as a blackbeetle in the place,' said Harry. 'It will be a splendid place for work, though, and when I begin to work, Bowker won't be able to go out so often, imitating his masters, and telling attorneys to return with their briefs in half an hour. How sorry I am that Edith should have come all this way for nothing! I wonder if she will ever come here again.'

So he set off home; but before he went he called the bundle, whom he heard rolling about in the chambers overhead, pretending to tidy them, and begged her to 'tell Bowker that he had been, and that it was very likely that he should be at chambers very soon again.'

‘Wery good, sir,’ said the bundle. But as soon as his back turned she chuckled, and said, ‘I don’t think Mr. Bowker will like to hear that. It will interfere with his copying, at which he earns better nor thirty bob a-week; and if it stops his speaking at night I am certain sure Mr. Bowker will resign.’

When Harry Fortescue had done what he wanted at chambers though it was not much after all, as you see, he went back to the club, and thought he would have luncheon; but when he got there he found he could not eat. The spring soup was cold, and he declared to the waiter that the cooking was disgraceful. Don’t believe him; the soup was as good as the soups at that club always. It was only his taste that was at fault—only another symptom of the dire disease.

After this pretence at luncheon, he wondered what in this world he should do before dinner. Should he go to the Exhibition? No, he had seen it already, and it was such a crush. Sit on a chair in the Park? No, he could not do that alone. He must have Edward with him—and how to find Edward? Now you all know he could have found him very well if he chose, but Harry Fortescue did not choose. He was only proposing one plan after another that he might reject it, and at last do what was lying, like Hope, at the bottom of that true Pandora’s box, the human heart. It is strange, but it is no less true, that the only companion Love ever cares to come with is Hope, and this is why Hope and Love so often lie together in the innermost recesses of the heart. Mr. Sonderling, perhaps, would have told you that what lay deepest in the breast of man was reflection; but then we are, fortunately, not all Sonderlings or Germans, and with us Hope and Love go for far more than reflection. At any rate, that is our view of the case, and in this view we are sure we have many sympathisers.

What Harry Fortescue really wanted was to see Edith Price, and his mind was set on doing this, and not on any luncheon, Exhibition, or chair in the Park, with or without Edward Vernon.

But he was some time in making up his mind; and, in fact, he sat almost as long thinking over Edith Price as Edward over Anne Carlton at Mrs. Boffin’s.

‘Did you ever hear of such geese?’ says some heartless young person; which young person is quite welcome to utter the insulting remark till she feels herself in the same position, and then if any one calls her a goose she will not like it.

At last—it must have been about four o’clock—Harry Fortescue rose quickly, put on his hat, and was soon striding along Pall Mall towards Lupus-street. His mind was made up. He was going to see Edith Price; and you may take our word for it that he did not look at all like a goose.

You know, if he had only been five minutes sooner, he would

have been seen by Mrs. Crump and the greengrocer. As it was, only the latter saw him as he was serving out greens to a customer, and so he said nothing except to himself, and what he said was very short and very much to the purpose—'There he is again.'

We cannot say that Harry Fortescue was not afraid when he knocked at the door. He was not yet in that condition of perfect love which banishes fear.

'Is Miss Price at home?' he asked, in a faltering voice, of Mrs. Nicholson. 'I know it's no use asking to see Mrs. Price, she's such an invalid.'

'I am sure I don't know, sir,' said Mrs. Nicholson, 'but I'll ask.' And away she ran upstairs to tell Edith that Mr. Fortescue was at the door and wanted to see her.

'Mamma is asleep,' said Edith, 'and I can't wake her up to ask her. But I should like to see him. Pray tell him, if he will return in half an hour, I may be able to see him.'

When Harry Fortescue heard that Miss Price begged him to return in half an hour, he thought at first that she was mocking him by returning him that lying label on the door of his chambers; but, whatever he thought, he saw that if he returned in half an hour he might have a chance of seeing Edith, whereas if he did not he should certainly not see her at all. Like a wise lover, therefore, he said at once he would return in half an hour, and walked off to spend that interval of time as he best might.

As Mrs. Boffin's was so close, it would have been most natural to go home and tell Edward what he had been doing, but somehow he did not feel as though he should like to tell Edward of his purposed visit to Edith Price. This was only another symptom. In the morning he had not been conscious; in the afternoon he was conscious and ashamed. The age of innocence was over in that affection. He felt like our first parents in Eden after the fall. Harry Fortescue had indeed fallen like them, but not into sin, only into love. Dear me! what a trouble this love is in this weary world!

He would not go home, therefore. He pottered about Cambridge-street and Churton-street, and all the unknown streets in that neighbourhood—streets so little known to the fashionable world that only once or twice in the year does an announcement of a birth or a marriage get into the newspapers from any of them; and then it is only a short notice, as of a runaway couple from the country, who have found their Gretna Green on Thames Bank, thus: 'At St. Gabriel's, Slopperton-street, Mary Moggs to John Perkins, both of Manchester. No cards.' As if there were likely to be any, any more than that such a couple could be assisted into the fugitive state of matrimony by more than one clergyman. Very few births are advertised there. They register their children, and don't christen them. But people die in Slopperton-street, as they

must die everywhere, and so there are more advertisements of death. All last year there were two from Slopperton-street in the *Times* — one was a retired solicitor, and the other a stockbroker whose business had retired from him. He closed his account, went to live in Slopperton-street, and died of a broken heart.

All round this neighbourhood did Harry Fortescue walk fiercely. Little boys looked at him, and whispered to one another that he was 'the Pimlico stag' come out to try his wind. At last he emerged on Thames Bank, near the mouth of the Grosvenor Canal and looked at the steamers and the Suspension Bridge, but it was only for a moment or two.

'Dear me! I sha'n't be back in time if I don't make haste.'

And back he went to Lupus-street, to the admiration of the little boys, who all thought he was taking his second lap.

'He's backed hisself to do a thousand miles in a thousand hours, and this is his first hour; that's why he's spurting so.'

But Harry never heeded them, and when he reached No. — Lupus-street, it still wanted ten minutes before the half-hour would be up.

'This watch of mine has taken to going slow,' said Harry; but it was only his own heart that had just taken to going fast. You all know, of course, that the heart is God's clock; that He regulates it, and makes it go fast or slow; that when He says, 'Stop!' it stops and we stop too. We cannot be too careful either of our hearts or our watches.

Off went Harry again, this time all down Lupus-street under the eyes of the greengrocer, who knew that he was not doing match against time. He watched him till the bend in Lupus-street took him out of his vision; for there is a bend and line of beauty in Lupus-street just as much as there is in the Venus de' Medicis. When he lost sight of him, the greengrocer shook his head and retired to his small coals and summer cabbages.

'I'll bet a penny I know what that young gentleman is after. But as there was no one to bet with, and it is dull work betting against oneself, Mr. Leek did not bet his penny.'

At last Harry Fortescue reappeared, tearing down Lupus-street on the same side of the street as the greengrocer's shop; and when he got opposite to Edith's house, he rushed across through the mud made by the water-carts, who made all the mud in London in the summer of 1870, and knocked at the door. Even then it wanted one minute to the half-hour, but he felt unless he knocked that very minute as if something would happen to him.

'Can Miss Price see me now?' he asked.

'Yes, sir; she has asked her mamma, and Mrs. Price don't object. You will find Miss Edith and Miss Mary in the back drawing-room.'



Now when Mrs. Price awoke—and she did soon after Harry Fortescue left the door—Edith went into her room, and said :

‘Mr. Fortescue has been here, mother, and asked to see me. I sent him away then, but I told him if he came in half an hour, I would ask if you objected to my seeing him.’

‘I don’t object, Edith, if you do not,’ said Mrs. Price, kissing her daughter’s broad brow. ‘You are mistress of the house now, you know.’

‘I wonder what he wants,’ said Edith.

‘What was it that he talked about yesterday? I know you told me, but my head is weak, and I have forgotten.’

‘About nothing but my going out as a governess, and I told him how heartbreaking it was to try so hard, and still to be of no use to you and Mary.’

‘I think you may see him,’ said Mrs. Price. ‘Perhaps he has heard of a situation for you from some of his grand friends. He used to be a nice well-behaved young man. Is he the same now?’

‘He seemed just the same yesterday,’ said Edith. ‘More of a man—more earnest—but still the same frank Harry Fortescue of whom poor papa was so fond.’

‘I think you might see Mr. Fortescue, Edith,’ said Mrs. Price. ‘Mary will, of course, be with you.’

‘Of course, mother,’ said Edith.

In a few minutes she left her mother, and ran for Mrs. Nicholson, and said she should be happy to see Mr. Fortescue.

## CHAPTER L.

### DEEPER AND DEEPER.

WHEN Harry Fortescue was going up those creaking stairs, so different from the slippery black oak staircase at High Beech, he could not help feeling like a fool. Was he not a young man of self-possession? He was. But when a man is in love he is not self-possessed, but love-possessed, and that is a very different matter. The little god is so jealous, he will bear no rival near his throne. He turns out all the feelings that existed before, and reigns supreme. Self-possession must yield before him like anything else. When, therefore, Harry Fortescue came into the presence of Edith Price he was tongue-tied, and scarcely knew what to say. He had accomplished his purpose and won his way to her, and now he faltered, as when a soldier who has scaled a fortress is smitten by a chance shot on the rampart he has won, and sinks and dies in the very moment of triumph.

‘I called to see you, Miss Price—’ and then he faltered and stopped.

‘It is very good of you,’ said Edith, quite cool and self-possessed and expecting him to say something, as she supposed he had something to say. Pray observe that she was as firm as she was free. Like a strong woman, she guarded her own house. Love had not yet entered into possession and served her common sense with notice to quit.

‘I thought—’ said Harry Fortescue, and then he stopped again.

Now what answer was Edith to make to this? What answer can a young lady make to a young man who has ‘thought’? It was too like Mr. Sonderling’s ‘reflection’—it was ridiculous. But Edith had no wish to laugh at him, so she said nothing.

‘I thought,’ said Harry Fortescue, recovering himself just a little—‘I thought I might be of some use to you.’

This at least was a connected and coherent sentence. It was not all interjection and ejaculation—as Love’s language generally is, for he feels so fast that his tongue fails him, and he babbles—so Edith could answer it.

‘You have been of great use to us already, Mr. Fortescue. We owe everything to you.’

‘I hope to be of still more use to you,’ said Harry. ‘The little I may have done was not half enough. I feel all the while as if I had been an unprofitable servant.’

That was a very long sentence for a man falling hopelessly in love; quite an oration, Cupid would have called it—Cupid, who loves short sentences and sighs and sobs; who lives on the inclinations of speech, and would never use a verb or a substantive, or even an adjective if he could help it.

But this long sentence was not thrown away. When both sides are not in love, they cannot exist on interjections. A German, whether in love or not, may go from one end of the world to the other, and never use any other expression than *Ja wohl!* or, *Ja* and he would eke it out with a pipe; but fortunately we are not smokers or all Germans, and so unless two people are in love in England they must use intelligible sentences. Now Edith Price was not in love, and so she answered Harry Fortescue’s sentence with another, expressing a wish, and the wish that just then was in her heart.

‘I do so wish I could get a situation as a governess. I thought perhaps you had come to say that you had heard of one that would suit me.’

‘I came to say nothing of the kind,’ said Harry abruptly. ‘I do not think such a position at all worthy of you.’

That was just the first tiny step—Baby Love’s first footfall. It was so gentle that Edith Price did not at all recognise it.

‘If the position is not worthy of me, I will make myself worth

of the position,' she said proudly. 'Anything is better, Mr. Fortescue, than obligation.'

She said this so sternly as well as so proudly, that Harry Fortescue was quite frightened, for he thought that Edith Price was going to pay off all her obligations to him, and have nothing more to say to him.

'I don't admit that there has been any obligation,' he said at last; 'but what I beg, and what Mr. Vernon begs, is that you will do nothing rashly, and not accept a position which may be irksome to you, because you fancy that you are our debtor, when it is we that feel ourselves in debt to you.'

'So this is what he came to say,' said Edith to herself. 'He came to beg me not to hurry. How good of him!'

But what she said at last was—

'It is very kind of you and Mr. Vernon to be so considerate. We all of us can never be sufficiently grateful to you for what you have done.'

By this time the conversation, such as it was, began to flag, and to threaten to degenerate into vain repetitions, as odious in conversation as in prayer. Harry Fortescue felt he had been there quite long enough, and yet he scarce knew how to beat a retreat. But here Love, who had before thwarted him, befriended him by suggesting, 'You had better say something which will give you an excuse for calling again very soon.'

Then Harry quite brightened up, as every one does at Love's prompting, and rose to depart; but before he went he shot Love's arrow, and it went home.

'It is possible,' he said, 'as you seem so anxious about getting a situation, that I may hear of one to suit you; and, if you will allow me, I will call again and tell you how I have succeeded.'

'O, Mr. Fortescue,' said Edith, 'I should be so much obliged if you would. The sooner I can do something for myself the better.' And as she said this her face was lighted up with a glow of independence and self-reliance, which made her lovely face twice as lovely.

So Harry took his leave, better pleased altogether with his visit than he had dared to hope. At any rate, he had leave to call again soon. But all the while he said to himself:

'She shall never go out as a governess, if I can help it. She looked more like a queen than a drudge when she shook hands with me.'

And so he went home to Mrs. Boffin's to dress for dinner. Strange to say, he found Edward sitting in the same position as when he left him, smoking and staring before him.

'Well, old man,' said Harry, who was in good spirits now, 'what have you been doing?'

‘Nothing,’ said Edward. ‘I haven’t even been out.’

‘Idle dog!’ said Harry. ‘I have done ever so much. For I went to chambers and saw our laundress. That lazy fellow Bowker was out as usual. I begin to think he’s almost as lazy as you. But I heard the whole story of Edith Price’s visit, and I’m afraid she was not very well received by the old woman. They had luncheon at the club.’ He did not say with how little appetite.

‘What more?’ said Edward listlessly.

‘And then,’ said Harry, hurrying on as if he were telling something of very little consequence, ‘I went to Lupus-street, and I paid a visit to the Prices.’

‘To the Prices!’ said Edward. ‘Why, you only saw them yesterday.’

‘I know,’ said Harry; ‘but I thought I might help the girl as to getting a situation, and so went to talk about it.’

At this Edward Vernon said nothing, but he thought a good deal and smoked vigorously. After a while he said, ‘We had better go and dress, or we shall be late for the opera.’

So they dressed, and went to the club in a hansom, and did not go to bed until after dinner. Then they went to the opera, and there they saw Miss Sweetapple in a box on the grand tier; and she bowed to them, and seemed as though she wanted them to come up to her; but Edward was afraid to go without Harry, and Harry would not go.

‘We have seen a good deal of her at High Beech,’ he said, ‘though it were an excuse for not seeing any more of her just now.’

‘I quite agree with you,’ said Edward, who was all on Florence’s side, and who would not have gone to Ascot except for the sake of seeing Alice.

‘We shall have enough of her next week at Ascot,’ said Harry. ‘Do you know, Edward, I am almost sorry I ever accepted Lady Charity’s invitation.’

‘There’s no good regretting it now,’ said Edward; ‘repentance comes too late. Go, we must to Ascot under Lady Charity’s wing, and you must not forget that you have to go to-morrow to Miss Sweetapple, to see if Lady Charity has invited me.’

‘I sha’n’t forget,’ said Harry. ‘And now, do you know, I find it so dull here, I shall go off home to bed.’

‘I’m quite ready to go with you,’ said Edward, who though he could think just as well about Alice in bed as at the opera, was just what Harry thought of himself and Edith Price. So the two again astonished Mrs. Boffin by their early hours, and, which had never occurred in their lodging-house life before, they went both to bed before twelve o’clock.

‘They must be both in love,’ said Mrs. Boffin,—‘they’ll be looking after their tea and sugar next,’ as she helped herself liberally out of the tea-caddy and sugar-basin, with the excuse, as

did so, that 'tea and sugar did so spoil and turn musty and sour if it were not used soon.'

In spite of going to bed early, Harry Fortescue scarcely slept a wink. He awoke quite wan and haggard, and no delicacy which Mrs. Boffin placed before him seemed to tempt him in the least. He was getting very far on in his disease.

As for Edward, his appetite was much as usual. His love only told on his heart and manner, not on his health, and so he seemed robust compared with Harry.

'You are looking ill, old fellow,' he said. 'Town doesn't agree with you after the country. You don't eat a morsel, and I daresay you don't sleep well.'

'I don't indeed,' said Harry.

'Well, cheer up,' said Edward, with great stupidity—'it will soon be all right. We shall meet the Carltons very soon at Ascot, and then we shall be as happy as the day is long.'

'You will, I daresay,' said Harry; 'but I don't feel as if I should be at all happy at Ascot.'

'You're the strangest fellow in the world,' said Edward. 'Why, we're all going because you were going, and now you say you feel as if you shouldn't be at all happy at Ascot.'

'I say what I feel,' said Harry.

'If you go on in that way,' said Edward, 'I shall have to take you to Gull. I tell you what it is, your liver is out of order.'

'We shall see,' said Harry, lighting his pipe. 'But let me alone a little now, that I may "reflect," like Mr. Sonderling.'

'With all my heart,' said Edward; 'for then I can think on Alice.'

So the two sat and smoked, and all the while that silly Edward thought Harry was full of Florry Carlton. He thought his dislike at going to Ascot was only because he did not care to go there with Amicia, and he was glad for Florry's sake.

'I sha'n't go down to chambers to-day,' said Harry, after he had been silent at least half an hour. 'I said I would go down and begin to work; but, on second thoughts, I shall put off work until this horrid Ascot visit is over.'

'I am all for putting off work,' said Edward. 'I am sure I don't care if I don't do a stroke of work for fifty years.'

'More shame for you,' said Harry. 'I really do mean to begin to work, only I don't exactly know how to set about it. I do wish my father had been a fat attorney.'

'Of course you can't take to work all at once,' said Edward, puffing out a philosophical cloud of smoke. 'Recollect the Latin proverb, *Nemo repente fuit turpissimus*, which some one profanely rendered, "It takes seven years to make an attorney."'

'Whether it is *turpe* or not to become a working barrister, I mean to try it,' said Harry, 'and that very soon.'



‘I shall believe it when I see it,’ said Edward. ‘But don’t you think it’s time you went to see Lady Sweetapple?’

‘Any time will do before luncheon,’ said Harry.

‘If you drive it off too long,’ said Edward, ‘she’ll fancy you coming to be asked to stay to luncheon.’

‘Very true,’ said Harry. ‘What is the time now? Half-past twelve! I had no notion it was so late. I must get to Lowndes-street as soon as I can.’

‘I hope you will be in better spirits when you come back,’ said Edward. ‘I never knew you so dull.’

So Harry Fortescue dressed himself, and before one o’clock was standing on the step of No. — Lowndes-street.

## CHAPTER LI.

### HARRY FORTESCUE CALLS ON LADY SWEETAPPLE.

Now if we were to say that Amicia had not been expecting him we should tell a dreadful story. Every one who lives in that part of the world knows how the door-bell goes in the height of the season; what with invitations and letters, and bills and circulars the tinkling never ceases.

As Amicia thought that every ring must be Harry’s, and that he would come early, because she wanted him to come early, she may imagine how often she had been disappointed. Once it was a card for Mrs. Grimalkin’s ‘At Home.’

‘I sha’n’t go to that,’ she said; ‘it’s in Ascot week, and in Ascot week I shall be otherwise engaged.’

Then came another ring. ‘That must be Mr. Fortescue;’ it was only the Dairy Reform Company, of which it may be said, that they leave no efforts untried to convince the world that theirs is only pure milk both for infants and adults. As soon as she saw Amicia tore it up in a rage and threw it, without reading it, into her waste-basket.

‘I hate milk,’ said Amicia. ‘I really do think it’s the nastiest thing in the whole world.’

Then came another. ‘Now he really is coming,’ she said, and gave a look at her lovely face in the glass. ‘Yes, I shall do,’ she said, as she turned to the door, expecting to see his handsome face. But it was only another circular. This time it was the Great Western Railway, which took time by the forelock, in announcing that excursion trains would run in August to all the places on the line at fares of fabulous lowness.

‘What insolence in these companies!’ said Amicia. ‘And they could not leave one to choose for oneself! And then, the Great Western to send this to me, who have property in the w

**If** I lived there, all my pleasure would be spoiled by these excursion trains.'

That circular too she tore into little bits, and away it followed ~~the~~ pure milk into the waste-basket.

'I won't expect him any more,' said Amicia. 'I have a great mind not to see him at all. It is too provoking to wait and wait, and never to see him.'

So she sat down and tried to read, but the more she read, the more she thought of Harry Fortescue, and how he dared to take Edith Price out to church on Sunday.

At last the right ring came, as we know, about one o'clock, when Amicia had been waiting two hours—and two hours is a long time to wait for a lady who is very much in love with a young gentleman.

She heard his footstep on the stair, and knew it as if by instinct.

'Now he's really coming,' she said; 'and I must forgive him if he behaves well.'

'O, Mr. Fortescue, I am so glad to see you again! How have you been? Are you quite well?'

She said this because she could not help seeing that he looked wan and pale and out of spirits, and her quick eye put it down at once to Edith Price.

'I do not feel very well,' said Harry, 'but it is nothing. Edward Vernon says it is only the change to London smoke after the pure air of High Beech.'

'It was your own fault. Why did you go?' said Amicia, returning to the old grievance.

'I thought I had explained,' said Harry, 'to my own satisfaction, if not to that of any one else, that I only went because I could not help going.'

'Yes, I know,' said Amicia bitterly. 'It was all about E. P. and that advertisement. Every one knows now who E. P. is. I knew it long ago. I told you her name was Price, and now every one knows that E. P. is Edith Price.'

'And what does it signify to any one if her name is Edith Price?' said Harry.

'O, nothing, of course,' said Amicia. 'I know nothing about her, thank heaven. I only know that her name is Edith Price; and, as her own advertisement confessed, she lives in Lupus-street—a very respectable locality, no doubt, but one in which, I must say, no one ever heard of a lady living before. Then about the cheque—'

'I desire, Lady Sweetapple,' said Harry, 'that you will say nothing about the cheque. It should be sufficient for you and all my friends to know that Miss Price is a lady in every sense of the word. I can give no farther explanations, and I expect to be believed.'

Amicia was a very clever woman, as you all know by this time.

She saw she had pushed her inquiries about Edith Price to the verge of a quarrel, and she wisely desisted. 'I am so glad to hear she is a lady,' was all she added, and then she went on—'I am glad you have come, because it is all settled about Mr. Vernon's visit to Ascot. Lady Charity says she will be delighted to see him at Heath House.'

'I have no doubt Edward will be delighted to come,' said Harry, as if he did not care very much for the visit, so far as himself was concerned.

'And do you not like to come, Mr. Fortescue?' said Amicia, in a tremulous voice.

'I thought I should like it very much when you asked me,' said Harry's guarded answer.

'But do you not care to come now?' said Amicia, feeling very much as if her fish were escaping out of her net, after all.

By this time Harry, who was really one of the best-natured men in the world, and also one of the best bred, began to see that he would be behaving in a very churlish way if he did not say something civil to Lady Sweetapple, after all the trouble she had taken to get Edward asked to Ascot.

'Of course I care about it. I daresay we shall be very happy at Ascot, if the weather is only fine.'

That was thoroughly English to bring in the weather as a cause of happiness; and, though Amicia had spent her youth among the deafts and dumbs, she could not help answering,

'What does the weather signify? I can always be happy' then she added, 'with those I like. I carry my own weather about with me.'

'Then I hope you will carry a large stock of fine weather with you,' said Harry; 'or, if I may order it for you, let it rain every night to lay the dust, and let there be bright sunshine every day so that we may enjoy the races.'

'I wish I could command the weather as you command me,' said Amicia; 'I would take care to please you in everything.'

As she said this, Amicia did not blush, but Harry blushed, and felt his face grow red and hot. He clutched his hat, and evidently meditated a retreat; but Amicia was not going to part with him yet.

'You mustn't go yet, Mr. Fortescue,' she said; 'I have so much to tell you.' And then, instead of telling him anything, she came and sat nearer to him, and asked him how he had liked the opera the night before.

'So little,' said Harry, 'that I went away at the end of the first act. I never enjoyed any music so little.'

'That was because you did not come up to me,' said Amicia. 'I did not care a bit for the music; but we might have had some rational conversation.'

What Lady Sweetapple meant by rational conversation Harry did not exactly understand, but he thought he must say something.

'I am sure I don't know why we did not go up to your box, except that we both felt so tired that we went home to bed.'

'When I saw you leave the stalls,' said Amicia, 'I made sure you were coming up to the grand tier, and I said so to my friend, Lady Gadabout—you know Lady Gadabout, of course?—but you never came; and so—and so,' she said, 'I too went back to bed, not so much tired as disappointed.'

'I should be so sorry to cause you any disappointment,' said Harry, who felt his face cool again.

'Then be a good boy and do as I tell you,' said Amicia. Then she went on, 'Do you never think of marrying, Mr. Fortescue?'

Harry's face began to glow again, and he felt his heart beating, much in the same way as it begins to palpitate at the beginning of a dreary sermon, and you know there will be thirty minutes more of it, and that there are five people between you and the door of the pew, over all whose feet you will have to trample to get out. If any one says his heart never palpitated in a pew in his life, all we can say is, that ours often has. In the same way Harry Fortescue felt that he was about to hear something possibly not to his advantage, and yet he could not jump up and run away. After a little pause, he answered,

'I have thought of it a great deal, and always come to the same conclusion.'

'And pray what is that?' said Amicia eagerly.

'That it is no use thinking of marriage if one has not money to support a wife.'

'A very poor excuse,' said Amicia. 'Other people have money if you have not.'

'Of course, I know that,' said Harry, not choosing to take what she said as she meant it—'of course, I know that. There is Lord Pennyroyal, for instance; he has plenty of money, and he is married. That only proves what I say. He has money, and is married; I have only a competence, and am not.'

'You will not understand,' said Amicia, almost violently. 'I meant there were women that had money.'

'Florry Carlton, for instance,' said Harry; 'but I know little of Florry Carlton.'

'I don't mean Florry Carlton,' said Amicia; 'I don't like Florry Carlton. If I had my way, I should never marry her to you. Other women have money besides Florry Carlton.'

'I don't think I shall ever marry a woman with money,' said Harry. 'It's against my principles. I could not bear to live on my wife's money.'

'That's being rather hard on all the heiresses and women who

have money,' said Amicia. 'Would you condemn them all to perpetual celibacy which I heard exalted by Mr. Rubrick last day, because you are too proud to marry a woman with money? Consider what the result would be—the world would come to an end.'

'Then, at least,' said Harry, 'our dear friend Mrs. Marjorie would have her way, and we should have the millennium.'

'I don't want the millennium,' said Amicia. 'I suspect it is only another term for a community of wives or husbands. If I married again, I should expect to have my husband all to myself, if he were young and good-looking, I should be very jealous of him and as she said this she gave Harry a look of love which it was possible to mistake—for you must all remember that Amicia is very fond of him, and very much piqued at his coldness.'

Harry Fortescue now felt that he must effect a diversion, try to escape. He thought he could best do this by carrying the war into the enemy's quarters; so he said, looking hard at Amicia.

'And have you never thought of marrying again, Lady Swallow?' apple?'

'How can you ask such a silly question?' said Amicia. 'I should have thought you knew better. I am very well as I am. Why should I marry again?'

This cunning answer nearly threw Harry off his balance.

'O,' he said, 'you spoke just now of what you would do if married again, and so I fancied you had thought about it.'

'Very ridiculous,' said Amicia; 'and just like a man. I always fancy women, and widows especially, are perpetually thinking of marriage. Now it is quite time enough for a single woman to think of marriage when some one proposes to her seriously. If you want to know my intentions,' she went on in a half-joking way, 'you had better propose to me, and then you shall have a plain answer; but pray do not do anything of the kind unless you are really in earnest.'

After this very clever speech, in which Amicia showed her mind without compromising herself, Harry Fortescue felt that if he did not mean to propose, he had better depart. And so he seized his hat and took leave.

'You will come and see me again,' said Amicia, 'before the week is out; and by that time I hope you will have abandoned your pride and your principles together, and made up your mind, if you meet a woman that you like, not to let her money stand in your way rather in her way.'

By the time she had ended, Harry was on the stairs, but he had heard it all; and what he said to himself when he got into the street was, 'I hardly know how I got out of that, but I feel as if I had had an escape of making a fool of myself.'



## CHAPTER LII.

HARRY FORTESCUE AND LADY SWEETAPPLE MAKE UP THEIR MINDS TO GET  
EDITH A SITUATION.

ABOUT the same moment Florry and Alice were making a clean breast of it to their mother, and telling her all they knew about Edith Price. It was very little, as you all know. It only came to this: that Lady Sweetapple said that Harry Fortescue was in love, as the young ladies put it, with one Edith Price, who was the E. P. of Harry Fortescue's advertisement, and that Edward Vernon had written a letter addressed to Edith Price, No. — Lupus-street, thus identifying her with E. P., Lupus-street.

When they had told all they knew to their mother, Lady Carlton only laughed at them, for their story had been told with many groans and confessions; and the only thing that was plain in the whole matter was, that Florry was just as much in love with Harry as Alice was with Edward.

'The mere fact of Edward Vernon's writing to Edith Price,' said Lady Carlton, 'proves to me that neither of them is in love with this mysterious Edith Price. You may depend on this; and so now I hope your minds will be easy. I am certain you have, neither of you, a dangerous rival in E. P.'

'But what I want to know is,' said Florry, 'how Lady Sweetapple became acquainted with the secret.'

'I am sure I cannot tell,' said Lady Carlton. 'Probably she heard it quite by accident. But if you will take my advice, you will, both of you, think nothing more of Edith Price, but make up your minds to be as happy as you can at Ascot.'

'I think I shall be quite happy at Ascot,' said Alice. 'But I do so much wish to know whether Lady Charity has asked Mr. Vernon to the races.'

'And I,' said Florry, 'should be so happy, if it were not that Lady Sweetapple, whom I look upon as the origin of all evil, were going to be there.'

'In this very contrary world, my dears,' said Lady Carlton, 'people had better make up their minds only to be as happy as is possible, and even then you will find it is possible to be very happy.'

'Ah, but I want to be entirely happy,' said Florry; 'I hate half-happiness. Sooner than not have the whole, I should prefer to be miserable.'

'Don't be so silly, Florry!' said her mother. And so that conversation came to an end.

As soon as Harry Fortescue got back to Mrs. Boffin's, he made Edward Vernon happy by telling him that Lady Charity had asked

him to the races, and then he astonished him by saying that he had a great mind not to go to the races at all.

'In fact, old fellow, if it were not for you, I wouldn't go down at all.'

'What has Lady Sweetapple said to you?' asked Edward.

'Nothing worth speaking of,' said Harry. 'But I may tell you I should not go to Ascot for her sake.'

'Then you'll go for Florry Carlton's sake,' said Edward.

'I am not so sure of that,' said Harry; and then he bounced out of the room, and ran up to his bedroom and threw himself on his bed.

In this position Mrs. Boffin espied him through a crack in the door, and she went down to Edward and told him that she was sure Mr. Fortescue must be 'hill,' as he was lying on his bed. 'A thing I never seed one of my gentlemen ever do before.'

'I don't think he's ill,' said Edward, 'only a little out of sorts. He'll be better presently.'

And then Edward Vernon sat in his arm-chair, thinking of Alice, and counting the days to Ascot; while Harry Fortescue lay on his bed and sulked, thinking of Edith Price.

And was Edith Price thinking of Harry Fortescue at all? That is a more difficult question to answer, as the minds of young women at that age are very dark. They are not nearly so transparent in their love affairs as young men. Still, we may venture to say, that if Edith Price had not the slightest notion in the world that Harry Fortescue was fast falling in love with her, there could be no doubt that she felt flattered by his attention and the evident interest he took in her and her affairs. Once or twice, therefore, after that interview on the Monday, she caught herself saying:

'How kind it was of Mr. Fortescue to come and take Mary and me to church, and how much more than kind to come and show such interest in getting me a situation! I wonder whether he will come again, and tell me that he has heard of one to suit me?'

Nor was it all a pretence on Harry's part, that offer of seeking for a situation for Edith. He was quite determined to seek, but just as resolved, if he could help it, that she should never accept.

'A girl like that,' he said, 'is not fitted to go out as a governess; she ought to do better. She will be quite thrown away, teaching little boys and girls. But, as I have promised, I must try to perform; and this very afternoon I'll set off and see Mrs. Grimalkin about it.'

Before he had those angry words with Lady Sweetapple about Edith Price, he had half made up his mind to ask her advice on the subject, but the hostility she had shown and her passion against Edith warned him off; though, if he had not been very blind, as men always are when in love, he might have known that Amicia

would have given her little finger to get rid of a rival, by packing her off as a governess into the country.

Now, however, he had lost all hope in that direction, and so his only refuge lay in Mrs. Grimalkin.

'I sha'n't trouble that lazy fellow, Edward, with this,' said Harry, as he stole down the creaking stairs. 'He doesn't care half so much for Edith as I do; he cares for nothing but Alice.'

And so when Edward awoke from his reveries, and asked Mrs. Boffin how Mr. Fortescue was, she told him:

'La, Mr. Vernon! Mr. Fortescue has been out this hour. I saw him walking down the street as fast as he could lay legs to the ground.'

'He might have told me he was going out,' said Edward to himself, who, for the first time in his life, felt as if he had a right to be jealous. 'I don't know what it is,' he went on: 'I feel as if there was a cloud rising between me and Harry, and yet I am sure it can't be Florry.'

However, this soon passed off; and when, an hour later, he went to the club and saw Harry sitting at luncheon, he went up to him and said:

'Why, Harry, Mrs. Boffin came and told me you were "hill," in her very choicest English; and then the next thing I heard of you was, that you were alive and walking, like Mother Hubbard's dog.'

'I went out on a little business,' said Harry; 'and having done it, you see I am here at the club, and ready to do whatever you wish.'

'I wish you would tell me what your business was,' said Edward.

'That is soon told,' said Harry, with his usual frankness. 'I went out to see if I could get a situation for Edith Price.'

'Edith Price again!' thought Edward; and then he said out loud, 'And did you hear of one likely to suit her?'

'I heard of several,' said Harry; 'but none that would be worthy of her acceptance.'

Here Edward was nearly saying, 'Beggars must not be choosers,' but he restrained himself, and went on:

'But she said she would be content with almost any situation.'

'So she did, no doubt; but that only makes it a duty for her friends to see that she does not throw herself away.'

'And whither did you go?' asked Edward.

'O, to Mrs. Grimalkin,' said Harry. 'You know she subscribes to all the governesses' homes, and knows all the lady-superintendents in London. But when she read out her list it came to this, that Edith would get, on the average, about twenty pounds a year, and have to find her own clothes out of that.'

‘Not very magnificent,’ said Edward. ‘How many twenty pounds a year do we pay for cigars?’

‘I am sure I can’t tell,’ said Harry. ‘But, do you know Edward, I don’t think I shall smoke much longer.’

‘Not smoke!’ said Edward. ‘Why, what’s the world coming to, Harry Fortescue? Not smoke! I can never believe it.’

‘You will believe it when you see it, like all the rest of the world,’ said Harry. ‘Of course I shan’t leave it off all at once. By degrees I shall drop my cigars, first one, then two, three, and so on, a day. Then, you will see, it will come quite easy.’

‘But why should you leave off smoking?’ said Edward—‘it awfully jolly.’

‘From motives of economy,’ said Harry with dignity.

‘I declare, Harry, I think you must have been bitten by Lord Pennyroyal. I never heard a fellow talk such nonsense in my life. Motives of economy! the very worst motives for a man with a competence.’

‘Perhaps I may want to do better things with my money,’ said Harry.

‘O, I see!’ said Edward. ‘You are going to invest it, like Lord Pennyroyal. I shouldn’t be at all surprised if you went in partnership with him in a sugar-beet factory.’

‘Don’t you laugh at me, Ned,’ said Harry sadly. ‘I am speaking quite seriously about economy.’

‘I am very sorry to hurt your feelings, Harry; but I really couldn’t help chaffing you a little. Why should a young man like you, who pays his way, want to hoard up his money and cut off his cigars?’

‘I have told you already,’ said Harry—‘I might make better use of it.’

‘It won’t be, I hope, till after Ascot,’ said Edward; ‘or, better still, put it off till the season is over, and then no one will detect you in the ungentlemanlike operation of cheeseparing.’

‘You may laugh,’ said Harry; ‘but I mean to save my money for all that.’

As he said this, he turned away into a room in the club where no one is allowed to speak loud, and so their conversation was cut short. He pretended to be going to write a letter, but it was nothing of the sort—it was only to escape from the society of the best friend he had in the world. Now see what a separatist Lord is, when he steps between the oldest friends and parts them, even when they are not both in love with the same woman! Talk of the exclusiveness of the Whigs! Love must have been the first of Whigs, he is so fond of choosing his own company, and that company is almost always himself.

‘I’m sure I can’t tell what has come over him,’ said Edward Vernon, as he looked at Harry through the glass door in the club.

'I wonder what it was that Lady Sweetapple said to him. He used to tell me everything that happened to him in the old times.'

From which you see that the silly fellow was still running his head against Amicia, and refusing to see the real rival to Florry Carlton which had sprung up in Edith Price. As for the 'old times' he talked of, they were as old as yesterday. It was only since that morning that he and Harry had any secrets from one another.

As for Amicia, it cannot be said that she was very happy. For once in her life she was completely puzzled. She could not tell whether Edith Price or Florry Carlton was most to be dreaded. When she heard from Mrs. Crump, on the authority of the greengrocer, that Edith Price was so respectable that she lived in lodgings with a bedridden mother, and even went to church, she was quite shocked. It was a great blow to her to find that Edith Price was not what she called a low-lived person; but when Mrs. Crump declared that Mr. Leek called her a real lady, she was in downright despair. In this state she had gone to the opera, when her mortification was great to find that Harry left the house without coming near her. When she waited for him and he never came, she grew more desperate; and at last, when they were on the verge of a quarrel, it was only her fear of losing him altogether that induced her to restrain her feelings.

But when he was gone, her despair returned. She now cared nothing for Florry Carlton; Edith Price was her real rival, and how she was to be got rid of was the next question. We know there are many writers who would not scruple to let their creations betake themselves to the nearest chemist's shop, disguised in a black beard and false nose, and then, having obtained prussic acid on pretence of poisoning a dog, to put it into half-a-dozen of dry champagne, and send it in as a present to the Prices from an admiring wine-merchant. Or they would have watched her to a refreshment-room, and when she was in the act of eating a Bath bun, they would have sprinkled arsenic over it; and so, in one way or another, have got her out of the way. But we are not as such writers of fiction; we prefer to dispose of our victims, if we have any, by natural means; and this is how we mean Amicia, if she can, to dispatch Edith Price—not into another world, but into the country. She thought if she could only get both her rivals out of the way, she could easily manage Harry Fortescue. As she sat and thought, it occurred to her that Mrs. Crump had been very clever in finding out so much yesterday from the greengrocer, and that she might as well send her out on the like mission again. The bell was rung, and in due time Mrs. Crump appeared, rather red in the face; for was it not the sweltering June of 1870, and had she not just had 'her' dinner—and a very hearty dinner too—off a shoulder of mutton and onion sauce?

'Crump,' said Lady Sweetapple, 'I don't think I shall wear that



violet velvet jacket again. It does not fit me, and it can't be altered. I will give it to you.'

'O, so many thanks, my lady!' said Mrs. Crump. And she was just about to run up-stairs and take possession of the coveted piece of attire, which she thought would just suit her complexion.

'And, Crump,' said Amicia, 'there is something else I want to say. You know Lupus-street?'

'Of course, my lady,' said Mrs. Crump, rather aghast; 'which it was the same street I was in yesterday.'

'Very true,' said Amicia; 'and to that street I want you to go to-day. You had better see your friend the greengrocer again, and find out all you can about the Price family.'

'Very well, my lady,' said Mrs. Crump. And away she went first to secure her jacket; and then she put on her things, and made herself tidy, as she called it, and then she sallied out to Lupus-street, which, after all, is not such a very long way from Lowndes-street.

All the while she was away Amicia sat and waited, for she could think of nothing but her rival; and it was a curious thing that they sat Harry Fortescue at the club, and Amicia in Lowndes-street, both thinking of Edith Price. If they had only known that they were thinking of the same person, what a comfort it would have been to them!

It was two hours before Mrs. Crump came back; but then she was open-mouthed.

'O, my lady, I have found out all about them. Mrs. Price is a poor widow, and she has two daughters, Miss Edith and Miss Mary, as I think I told you yesterday; and they have nothing to live on; and it is said what they have comes from Mr. Fortescue—that is to say, from the gentleman as took them to church, and that is Mr. Fortescue. And Mr. Leek—that's the greengrocer, my lady—says that I was hardly gone yesterday, when he seed Mr. Fortescue walking up the street like a mad thing, and he went up No. —, and gave a knock as made the street-door shake again, and when it was opened he said something and went away, but he walked up and down the street for half an hour, and then he went back and went in, and stayed there ever so long. All this is as true as gospel, and Mr. Leek is ready to swear it.'

'We are not detectives, Crump, or the police. We don't want Mr. Leek to swear; we only want him to tell the truth.'

'He do tell the truth, if I'm a judge of truth, my lady,' said Mrs. Crump.

'Perhaps he only saw the bedridden mother,' said Amicia, half aloud, wishing to give herself and Harry every chance.

'As if Mr. Fortescue were a man to go and see a bedridden mother, my lady!' said Mrs. Crump indignantly. 'My name is not Crump, if he did not go to see Miss Edith.'



‘Go on, Crump,’ said Amicia. ‘Did you find out anything more about the family?’

‘Yes, my lady. Mr. Leek do say that Mrs. Nicholson—that’s the landlady, my lady—told him that as the family were very poor, Miss Edith were trying to go out as a governess, but, try all she could, she could not get a situation.’

‘Indeed!’ said Amicia, with a bright smile on her lips. ‘So Miss Edith wants to go out as a governess. If she did not object to go into the country, one might assist her in getting a situation. It would only be an act of charity to help the poor family.’

‘It would, my lady,’ said Mrs. Crump. ‘And as to objecting to go into the country, it’s only servants as make that objection. Governesses are always ready to go where they can get places.’

‘Very true,’ said Amicia. ‘It is so hard to get good servants, and there really is such a glut of governesses.’

‘No doubt of it,’ said Mrs. Crump. ‘Miss Price would be glad enough to go into the country.’

‘That will do, Crump,’ said Amicia. ‘You have done what I desired very cleverly, and you may have my shot velvet skirt as well as the jacket; I sha’n’t wear it again.’

‘O, thank you, my lady,’ said Mrs. Crump, as she vanished, thinking, as she went, that she would not object to go even into the country if her visits were so well rewarded.

‘Now I see a means of escape,’ said Amicia passionately, as soon as Mrs. Crump was gone. ‘It will be no hard matter to get a situation for this girl, and to banish her to some distant part of the country—South Wales or Cornwall, or even Scotland or Ireland. She must be separated from Harry Fortescue. Going to church on Sunday with a pretty governess is very bad for young men. For my part, I wonder how Mrs. Price could have permitted it. Why, I, an old married woman and a widow, scarce dare to walk to church alone with a young man; how much worse, therefore, must it be for a young girl! No, they must be separated as soon as possible, and then all will go right. As for Florry Carlton, I defy her; she will only appear in the field at Ascot to be beaten.’

Then she thought a little while and said,

‘Yes, I have it. First, I will go to Mrs. Grimalkin—she always has a list of friends who want governesses; and if I can’t hear of a situation from her, I will throw myself back on dear Lady Charity’s kindness; she knows every one, and will be sure to have friends in the country who want a governess. But it must be in the country.’

With these words she rang the bell, ordered her carriage, and in half an hour was on her way to Clarges-street, in which the Honourable Mrs. Grimalkin lived.

## CHAPTER LIII.

AMICIA GOES TO MRS. GRIMALKIN, AND FAILS.

LADY SWEETAPPLE knew Mrs. Grimalkin too well to tell her the whole truth. It is well known that there are grown-up people in the world to whom you can no more tell the whole truth than you can give a new-born babe a beefsteak ; it is too much for them ; they cannot assimilate it all themselves ; they have to share it with others ; in a word, they gossip about it, and great harm arises.

'Mrs. Grimalkin is not like dear Lady Charity,' thought Amicia—'one can't altogether confide in her ; but then she has many friends, and, in short, knows much more about governesses

The Honourable Mrs. Grimalkin is, as you all of course know, the spinster sister of Lord Tabbicat. They are a very, very old family—older in fact than the Pennyroyals. They were here before the Conquest ; and, though no Burke or Dod of those days have come down to us, it is as sure as anything can be sure that there were Grimalkins in Britain in the time of the Romans. Mrs. Grimalkin was pretty well off for an old maid of quality, and she lived in a little poky house in Clarges-street. Why she lived there nobody quite knew. Some said it was because Clarges-street is so narrow that you can always see what your opposite neighbour is doing. Men don't so much appreciate this advantage, but to old ladies we seldom stir out this privilege of always keeping your eyes on a family over the way is invaluable. Others said Mrs. Grimalkin lived there because the house had belonged to her mother, Lady Tabbicat, who had left it her by will. If this be so, there can be no doubt that Mrs. Grimalkin had two good reasons for living in Clarges-street—the gratification of a laudable curiosity as regards her neighbours, and her mother's bequest. We hope, therefore, that no one will ever ask again why Mrs. Grimalkin lives in Clarges-street.

When Amicia arrived she found Mrs. Grimalkin in her boudoir as she called it—a little back drawing-room, pokier even than the front drawing-room. The house, of course, was divided against itself and had the staircase in the middle. You say you don't know Mrs. Grimalkin, and would be glad to know what she is like. We can't pardon—we thought every one knew Mrs. Grimalkin ; but if you must know, this is what she is like. She is a little old woman with a brown face and very bright eyes—eyes as bright as diamonds, and a skin as brown as a berry. Why she looks so sun-burnt is hard to say ; perhaps she gets so burnt in her two months at Hastings in the summer that she can't get the tan off all through the year. If it were fair to compare a lady of such old family to an animal, one would say Mrs. Grimalkin was like a toad—she was as brown as a toad, and as fat as a toad, and as slow as a toad in her

talk, and her eyes were as bright as a toad's. Some uncharitable people carried on the comparison, and said she was as spiteful as a toad; but they were wrong both as to toads and Mrs. Grimalkin, for it is well known now that toads are not spiteful, and if toads are not spiteful, then Mrs. Grimalkin was not spiteful either. For the rest, she always wears black, has a brown wig, excellent false teeth, and is one of the few women left who take snuff.

When Amicia arrived, Mrs. Grimalkin was busy with what she called her 'cases.'

'I am so glad to see you, dear Lady Sweetapple,' said Mrs. Grimalkin. 'Is there anything that I can do for you?'

'You really might do me a very great service,' said Amicia—'you who know every one and everything.'

'What is it?' said Mrs. Grimalkin, her bright eyes sparkling with curiosity, for she well knew that Amicia would not have been so urgent unless she had something very much at heart. 'Is it anything about one of my "cases"?' And as she said this she pointed to a sort of ledger.

'It's about a young person I want to put out as a governess,' said Amicia. 'I thought it so likely that you would know of a situation in which a poor girl would be comfortable.'

'O,' said Mrs. Grimalkin, 'I thought it might be a scarlet-fever case, or a small-pox case, or,' sinking her voice to a whisper, and hissing, we must say, very like a toad, 'maternity case. I have cases of all sorts. Here's a young woman who has just been taken with small-pox at her place; another with scarlet fever; another with mumps; and here's a poor woman whose husband has run away from her after living with her eight months—that's my maternity case.'

'It's no case at all like that,' said Amicia. 'It has nothing to do with marriage or maternity. I want a place for a young person as a governess.'

'It's very odd,' said Mrs. Grimalkin, rubbing her skinny brown hands, much as a toad rubs his fore-feet together—'it's very odd, but there is what I may call a run on governesses to-day. It is not two hours ago since Mr. Fortescue was here asking me to get a place for a governess.'

'Indeed!' said Amicia, feeling very confused; 'and pray what was her name?'

'That, my dear,' said Mrs. Grimalkin, 'if you'll allow me to say so, is a very indiscreet question. Mr. Fortescue never told me the name of the young lady. He called her a young lady, and not, you call your object, a young person; and as he did not tell me the name, and as his visit came to nothing, I did not ask it.'

'It must be Edith Price,' thought Amicia; and then she went aloud, 'And so his visit came to nothing?'

‘Yes,’ said Mrs. Grimalkin, refreshing herself with a pinch snuff—some of Lord Harrington’s mixture, which her brother, Lord Tabbicat, had bought at his sale. ‘Yes: young men are so particular nowadays. I read him out ever so many eligible situations but he turned up his nose at all of them, and went away saying none of *those* would suit.’

‘Perhaps I am not so particular,’ said Amicia. ‘Your impression, I suppose, was that Mr. Fortescue was not in earnest about this situation.’

‘I cannot go so far as to say so much as that,’ said Mrs. Grimalkin, ‘but he seemed inclined to pick and choose. The idea of a governess picking and choosing is quite preposterous.’

‘Quite so; it is disgusting,’ said Amicia.

After another pinch of Harrington’s mixture, Mrs. Grimalkin went on,

‘Shall I read you out a few of my governess cases? Then you will be able to judge for yourself. Here’s first,’ read out Mrs. Grimalkin, putting on her spectacles, ‘a situation in the Regent’s Park—’

‘That won’t do at all,’ said Amicia, so abruptly that the toady we beg her pardon, Mrs. Grimalkin—turned her bright eyes on her to see what was the matter.

‘Not take a situation in the Regent’s Park! Why, you are more particular than Mr. Fortescue.’

‘I may say at once,’ said Amicia, ‘that the young person whom I wish to serve has a great objection to a situation in town, or near it; at least, her friends wish her to be in the country.’

‘O, I see,’ said Mrs. Grimalkin. ‘It is quite a comfort to have even a governess who has no objection to go into the country.’

‘Indeed it is,’ said Amicia, ‘and that’s why I hope you will be able to help us. The farther she is removed from town, the better this young person will be pleased.’

‘Well, well,’ said Mrs. Grimalkin, ‘I think I shall be able to please her. I suppose, as she doesn’t mind going into the country, she is fully competent to teach young children all the usual branches of a sound and useful education.’

‘You may rely upon it,’ said Amicia, ‘that this young person is well qualified for her duties in every particular.’

Here we stop, gentle reader, to beg you of your charity to forgive Lady Sweetapple for telling such a story. She knew nothing of Edith Price’s attainments, and yet she was giving her a first-rate character. You must recollect that Amicia was very much in love with Harry Fortescue, and ready to do and to say anything to get Edith Price out of the way.

‘That makes the recommendation for a country situation much easier,’ said Mrs. Grimalkin. ‘It is a sad thing for a family in Wales to have a young person palmed off on them upon false

representations, and then to find that she cannot speak a word of French, or even play her scales.'

'Do you think I would impose upon you, dear Mrs. Grimalkin?' said Amicia, with her sweetest smile.

'I feel quite comfortable about this young person, whom you seem to know so well,' said Mrs. Grimalkin; 'and I shall have great pleasure in recommending your friend. Let me see what will suit her. She doesn't mind distance from London. Do you think she would object to South Wales?'

'South Wales would suit her admirably,' said Amicia. 'How far is it off by railway?'

'O, a weary way, as I know to my cost,' said Mrs. Grimalkin; 'for I went down to stay with this very family last year. I was tired to death, and nearly ruined by trains and flies.'

'What is the name of the family?' asked Amicia.

'Mumbles,' said Mrs. Grimalkin. 'Mumbles of Mumbles, near Milford Haven. It is a charming part of the country, when you have got to it.'

'And what are the advantages of the situation?' said Amicia.

'The Mumbles,' said Mrs. Grimalkin with dignity, 'are not a wealthy family. The property is pretty good, but old Mr. Mumbles, whom I remember when I was a girl, got into difficulties. He was a friend of the Duke of York, and lent him money. The Duke always said he would do something for Mumbles when he came to the throne, but as you know he never came to the throne, and so poor Mumbles got nothing. How true is it, dear Lady Sweetapple,' Mrs. Grimalkin went on, in a religious fit, 'how true it is that we should never put our trust in princes! The Bible is always right, and if Mr. Mumbles had only attended to its divine injunction, he would never have got into difficulties. Well, he died, leaving a very encumbered estate. What did young Mumbles do to retrieve the fortunes of the family? Why, he went and married a woman without a farthing, and has had twelve children. You understand now, my dear, why the Mumbles can't afford to ruin themselves in an extravagant governess.'

'No one can expect them to pay more than they can afford. A man is not bound to ruin himself to educate his children,' said Amicia.

'Quite so,' said Mrs. Grimalkin; 'and how fortunate it is for us both, dear Lady Sweetapple, that I am not married, and you have no children!' Here Mrs. Grimalkin refreshed herself with a philosophic pinch of snuff.

'But what is the salary?—for it comes to that, after all,' said Amicia.

'The salary?' said Mrs. Grimalkin. 'Let me see what they say about salary. O, they give no salary. They wish for a young



person to teach six young children, three boys and three girls—~~five~~ high-spirited children all of them—and to be always with them, ~~and~~ in return they will treat her as one of the family, and pay her ~~for~~ down. What do you think of that?’

‘I think it will not suit my young friend.’ Fancy Amicia ~~can~~ ing Edith her friend! ‘Not at all, I should say. She must ~~have~~ some salary, or how is she to dress herself?’

‘There’s very little dressing in South Wales,’ said Mrs. Grimalkin apologetically, as if she were bound to defend the honour of the Mumbles family.

‘I suppose they wear some dress?’ said Amicia dryly.

‘Of course they do,’ said Mrs. Grimalkin, the blood of the hot of Tabbicat rising to her brown cheeks. ‘They are not like the Ancient Britons, who dressed in woad and amber beads. All meant was that the Mumbles see little company, and, if they wish it, they could not be extravagant in dress near Milford Haven.’

‘The Mumbles will not do,’ said Amicia, who felt that if ~~she~~ were to get Edith out of town, she must have something to offer her.

‘But the Mumbles are such a charming family,’ Mrs. Grimalkin persisted. ‘It is true, dear Mrs. Mumbles is a little deaf, and ~~she~~ always has to raise one’s voice in talking to her, but what ~~exerts~~ is that to a healthy young person? If your friend would only reflect on it, I think the situation might suit her. It has great prospective advantages.’

‘I see none either in the present or the future,’ said Amicia.

‘There you are wrong,’ said Mrs. Grimalkin; ‘for dear Mrs. Mumbles, in her very last letter, said the only reason why their ~~governess~~ left was that she had married the rector of the parish. It is quite true, I believe, that the rectory is only worth ~~thirty~~ pounds a year, but it is a great social rise for a governess to marry a rector; and, if you reflect on it, you will see that a rectory with thirty pounds a year is very tempting to a governess who has no salary.’

‘I have not the least doubt the Mumbles are very charming,’ said Amicia; ‘but my young friend must have some salary; that is a *sine quâ non*.’

‘Then,’ said Mrs. Grimalkin, leaning over her case-book, ‘there are the Peregrines in Monmouthshire. That’s a nice out-of-the-way place; a good way from London, and thirty miles from a railway. They live at Peregrinestow, and came in with the Cornquest. Mr. Peregrine is a widower; that might be an objection to your young friend, and hardly proper; but then there is one comfort—Mr. Peregrine is a lunatic, and is constantly guarded by a keeper. There are five children there, very unruly and neglected for poor Mrs. Peregrine has been dead some years. They are waiting



in Chancery, and are educated under an order of the Court. The property is small, and the Court only allows thirty pounds a year for the education of the children. Do you think that would suit you ?

‘I am afraid not,’ said Amicia ; ‘I should not like to send my friend into a lunatic’s house, fearing he might cut her throat.’

‘O, dear, no !’ said Mrs. Grimalkin ; ‘there’s no fear of that. Mr. Peregrine is too great a gentleman to raise his hand against a lady. There was a story, now I recollect, that he used to beat poor Mrs. Peregrine, but it was never proved ; and, after all, if a man is to beat any woman, he may as well beat his wife as any one else. I should think your friend need be under no alarm as to Mr. Peregrine.’

‘The Peregrines will not do any more than the Mumbles,’ said Amicia.

‘Then I am afraid I can’t help you just now,’ said Mrs. Grimalkin. ‘In town, or near town, there are several situations I could mention. The Trowels in the Regent’s Park. Mr. Trowel rose from being a journeyman mason. They give fifty pounds a year. The Portefeuelles in Grosvenor-street ; they were French emigrants originally, you know, and have been always in official life ever since. Very capable people are the Portefeuelles, and very much respected ; you meet them everywhere. They want a thorough good governess, and will give one hundred pounds a year ; but perhaps your young friend might not be equal to such a situation. Then near Croydon are the Saint Mungos, a very old Scotch family, one of whom went into trade in Glasgow, and made a fortune in the tea and sugar line. They are very well off, and live partly in town and partly in the country. Mrs. Saint Mungo has an only daughter, and will give seventy pounds a year. Then, I see, Lady One-chicken, whose daughter, the great heiress, is married at last, wants a young lady as a secretary. She is a very severe, hard woman, and I would not recommend any friend of mine to go to her ; but she will pay very well. Then there’s—’

‘Nothing near town or in town will suit my friend,’ said Amicia. ‘I am so sorry to have taken up so much of your valuable time, dear Mrs. Grimalkin, and all to no purpose.’

‘Don’t mention it,’ said Mrs. Grimalkin. ‘I am only too ready to help my friends when I can ; but then,’ she added, as she reflected on Harry Fortescue and Amicia’s scruples, ‘but then they must not be too particular.’

So Amicia went away as she came, resolved to get Edith out of town, but feeling it was not so easy to find her a situation as she had expected.

## CHAPTER LIV.

## LADY CHARITY HELPS AMICIA.

‘THERE’s no help for it,’ said Amicia, as she stepped into her carriage—‘I must try dear Lady Charity.’

‘Drive to Lady Charity’s,’ she said; and she soon alighted at her door.

‘Glad to see you again, Amicia dear,’ said Lady Charity. ‘I suppose you have come to settle something about Ascot.’

‘No, I have not,’ said Amicia, in a very excited way. ‘I have come to make a confession. There’s a young person I wish to get out of town.’

‘And that young person’s name,’ said Lady Charity, ‘is—’

‘Edith Price!’ As she said this, she threw her arms round Lady Charity’s neck, and burst into tears.

‘Why, what is the matter, Amicia darling?’ said Lady Charity, taking her by both her hands. ‘What’s Edith Price to you?’

‘A great deal more than the whole world just now, except Harry Fortescue. Edith Price stands between me and him, and I want to get her a situation as governess, and to send her out of town at once.’

‘But does she want to be a governess?’ said Lady Charity. ‘If she does not, it’s no use trying to get her to go.’

‘That’s my only chance,’ said Amicia; ‘she does want to be a governess; and if I can send her off at once, before harm comes, I shall be so happy.’ And then she began to sob and sigh again.

‘Amicia,’ said Lady Charity, ‘don’t be silly, and lose your head. Is Edith Price thoroughly respectable?’

‘Entirely so, on my honour,’ said Amicia warmly.

‘I would rather have it on her honour than on yours,’ said Lady Charity; ‘but I daresay it all comes to the same thing. Amicia, I think I can find you a situation for her.’

‘O, thank you so much,’ said Amicia; ‘but it must be in the country, and it must be good enough to tempt her out of town.’

‘It is a good situation,’ said Lady Charity, ‘and it is out of town—down in Norfolk, near King’s Lynn.’

‘So much the better,’ said Amicia. ‘Are they friends of your family?’

‘Old friends,’ said Lady Charity. ‘They are my cousins, the Blicklings. There are two little girls, and Mrs. Blickling will give me a hundred pounds a year; but then she must have a ladylike person with a thorough knowledge of French and music.’

With Lady Charity, Amicia knew she could be more confident than she had been with Mrs. Grimalkin. Lady Charity knew about her feeling for Harry, and she had nothing to conceal.

‘I am sure,’ she said, ‘I can’t say whether Miss Price knows music and French thoroughly. I do not even know if she is law-

like or a lady. In fact, I know nothing about her, except that she has an attraction for Harry Fortescue.'

'I don't think you even know as much as that,' said Lady Charity. 'You're afraid, Amicia, that's all. There's only one thing to be done. You or I must see Miss Price, and then we shall be able to say whether we can offer her the situation. All I can say is, that if she answers the requirements of Mrs. Blickling, she can have the situation.'

'She must and shall have it,' said Amicia.

'In my school-days, I remember,' said Lady Charity, 'we used to be told "shall" for the king, and "must" for the queen; but I suppose it's all altered now.'

'Well,' said Amicia, 'which of us shall see her—you or I?'

'I think you had better not see her,' said Lady Charity. 'Your feelings are too much engaged. I will see her to-morrow morning, if that will suit you.'

Now, Amicia, to tell the truth, would have given a good deal to see her rival, as she was convinced Edith Price was; but she could not help seeing that what Lady Charity said was right, and that she had better not see her; so she said,

'Very well.'

'I will write her a line to-night,' said Lady Charity, 'informing her that I hear she is looking out for a situation, and that if she is inclined to call on me at eleven o'clock to-morrow, I shall be able to offer her one which it might suit her to accept. I shall then be able to judge both as to her respectability and her acquirements.'

'You are an angel, dear Lady Charity!' said Amicia, kissing her on both cheeks.

'You have called me that before,' said Lady Charity, 'and I do not at all feel as if I deserved the endearing name; but I will do what I can to help you.'

'So different from Mrs. Grimalkin,' said Amicia, as she drove off. 'That's what I call a reliable, trustworthy friend.'

And so she drove home, feeling much easier in her mind than she had been, as she expressed it, 'for ages.'

Now let us return to Harry and Edward. After Edward Vernon had left Harry a sufficient time by himself to have written twenty letters, he went into the waiting-room, and saw him still sitting doing nothing at the table.

'This will never do,' said Edward. 'I must go in and take him out for a walk. What a silly fellow he is! He'll find it all right with Florry as soon as he sees her at Ascot.'

So he went in and tapped him on the shoulder, and Harry turned round as sharply as though a serpent had stung him.

'I say, Harry,' said Edward, 'won't you come out for a walk? The sun isn't so hot now.'

'Whither shall we walk?' asked Harry stupidly; 'down to chambers?'

'Down to chambers of a June afternoon!' said Edward; 'why, even those pale-faced fellows at Mr. Sheepskin's would laugh if they saw us. As for Bowker, he's away at Greenwich or Richmond. O, no; if we go anywhere, it must be to the Park.'

'What shall we do in the Park?' asked Harry, whose head was full of Edith Price, and thought there was no street in the world so adapted for a constitutional as Lupus-street.

'Do? Why, do as we have done a thousand times before—sit on chairs, and talk and bow to our friends.'

'That ass Pantouffles is sure to be there,' said Harry. 'I can't bear Pantouffles.'

'He's sure to be there,' said Edward; 'but he'll be so full of bowing he will not bore us by conversation. After all, I don't think he's such a bad fellow.'

'Well, let us go,' said Harry, with the air of a victim.

It was very hot, and as soon as they got to the top of the Row they sat down under the shade of the trees, just where they could command the Row and the Drive. Sure enough, they had not been there five minutes before they saw Count Pantouffles and Mr. Beeswing coming up to them. Right and left Count Pantouffles bowed, and right and left Mr. Beeswing smiled and said witty things, so that, though they were near, their progress was slow.

'Here they come, mind and matter,' said Edward. 'Why should not poor Pantouffles bow, if he hasn't anything better to do? Besides, he does it so beautifully.'

'Mind and matter!' reëchoed Harry Fortescue; 'I should rather call them head and hatter.'

'Call them what you will, Harry,' said Edward, 'only cheer a little. Here they are.'

'O,' said Mr. Beeswing, recognising them, 'here are the fugitives. Well, Harry, did you find E. P. all right, and did you draw the cheque when you got up to town?'

'O yes,' said Edward Vernon, answering for Harry; 'it was right; but Harry has not been very well since he came back, and I have brought him out here to have a little air.'

'You're going to Ascot, of course?' said Count Pantouffles.

'Yes,' said Edward; 'we are both going. I hope we shall have good fun, and that the racing will be good.'

'I hope the Baron's horses are in good form. See if he doesn't win the Ascot stakes. He's always lucky there.'

'We shall see,' said Edward.

'I'll bet you a pony against the favourite for the Cup,' said Mr. Beeswing.

'Thank you,' said Edward. 'I never bet; I can't afford it.'

‘Why, Harry,’ said Mr. Beeswing, turning to Harry, who sat in his chair, looking at least as idiotic as Count Pantouffles, ‘where’s your tongue? You haven’t spoken a word either to the Count or me since we came up. It’s very rude of you. I have heard of young gentlemen leaving their hearts in the country, but never their tongues. Why don’t you say something?’

‘It is very hot,’ said Harry.

‘So it was yesterday,’ replied Mr. Beeswing; ‘and so it will be to-morrow. If it doesn’t rain, the weather will be fine. Have you any more truisms?’

Before Harry could answer, Count Pantouffles raised his hat, with one of those magical bows which had made him his world-wide reputation, and when they all turned in that direction, they saw Amicia dashing down the Drive in her open carriage.

‘There she goes,’ said Mr. Beeswing. ‘What a pace she gets out of that pair! Well, they are grand steppers.’

As one bow makes many, Mr. Beeswing bowed, and Edward bowed, and even Harry bowed, though he was the last of all. Amicia saw them all at a glance, and gave them a circular bow—one that took them all in at once; and when she had ended that, she gave Harry a little private particular bow all to himself. There was not time for anything more, and then she was gone.

‘She looks very well,’ said Mr. Beeswing, ‘though she was so disappointed on Saturday when somebody went to town.’

‘How did you leave Mr. Sonderling?’ said Edward, trying to turn the conversation.

‘O,’ said Mr. Beeswing, ‘he was as good as a play on Saturday and Sunday, and he ended by giving us a lecture on atheism lying on the grass on Sunday afternoon.’

‘I do think he is a big ass,’ said Count Pantouffles. ‘It is a disgrace to Germany that such a fool should be allowed to settle in England.’

‘Why don’t they recall him to the Fatherland to serve in the Landsturm?’ said Mr. Beeswing. ‘I am sure we could very well spare him.’

Then, as Harry showed no symptoms of returning animation, Mr. Beeswing said, ‘I think, Count, as Harry is so dull we won’t disturb his meditations any longer. Let us walk a little farther down under the shade of the trees. Good-bye, Harry; I hope to see you at Ascot in better form.’

‘Good-bye,’ said Harry mechanically; and so they parted.

‘I tell you what, Harry,’ said Edward: ‘this will never do. You really must have advice. Tell me what will do you any good.’

‘Nothing that you can do,’ said Harry. ‘There is only one thing that can do me any good.’

‘Tell me what it is, and I’ll do it,’ said Edward. ‘Shall I down to High Beech and make it up for you with Florry?’

‘I don’t want to make it up with Florry,’ said Harry. ‘I tell you what, Ned: you stay quietly here, while I take a walk by myself.’

‘I shall do nothing of the kind,’ said Edward angrily. ‘I tell you I will never leave you, and I shall go with you wherever you go.’

‘Well,’ said Harry, ‘let us take a stroll. I’m bored to death with the Row and the Drive.’

‘I’ll go wherever you like,’ said Edward Vernon; and they started.

On and on they walked, through Albert-gate, where they were nearly run over in crossing, because a policeman would try and hit them over; then they went down William-street, and along Lowndes-square.

‘Shall we go in and have an ice?’ said Edward, when they passed Gunter’s. It was so hot, and he knew Harry, when he was in his right mind, was fond of ice.

‘No,’ said Harry, as if poor Edward had asked him to break not one, but all the Commandments.

‘O, I thought—’ said Edward.

‘Come along,’ said Harry savagely. ‘You oughtn’t to think of that.’

Edward, however, looked at him reproachfully, as a lamb might look at the butcher about to cut its throat, but he said nothing.

‘I see it,’ he thought: ‘he wants to call on Lady Sweetapple, and he is afraid, because he has already called on her once to-day.’

But they passed Nos. 12, 11, 10, and, in fact, all the numbers in Lowndes-street, without stopping at any of them. We are going to tell you at what number Amicia lived; for who can tell whether she lives there in 1872, as she lived there in 1870? You and all of you, are aware, of course, that in coming from Lowndes-square you meet the numbers as we have mentioned them, and that when you have reached No. 1 you are at the end of the street.

‘He is very cunning,’ thought Edward, after they had passed Amicia’s house; ‘he wants to ring, but he can’t make up his mind. He’ll turn round in a minute and go back to her house.’

But Edward Vernon was mistaken. On Harry walked in a dreamy way along Chesham-place and Chesham-street—which the people who live in Chesham-place wish to heaven were called by any other name, for do they not get all their letters and cards misdirected to the numbers in Chesham-street which correspond to theirs? When they got to the end of Chesham-street, Edward had another conjecture, which was confirmed when Harry turned down Eaton-place.

‘How stupid I was!’ he thought. ‘Of course he is going to call on Lady Charity, and to thank her for asking us so kindly to Ascot.’

But, no; Harry had only gone into Eaton-place to get into Clestone-street, and he showed no inclination to call on Lady Charity.



So on and on they went, down Eccleston-street, across Eaton-square, where Edward saw a lot of girls hard at croquet, and did long so very much that he were at High Beech, playing the same game, or any game, with Alice Carlton. But Harry looked neither to the right nor to the left. He sped on like a sonnambulist, and passed quickly across the square, and then still along Eccleston-street, across Chester-square, and across Eccleston-bridge. Up to that time Edward, though he was rather shy of making any more guesses, was firmly convinced that Harry was going home to Mrs. Boffin's for some inscrutable purpose. He was even reduced to fancying that he had lost an important button, or that the stud at his neck, on which all the other studs depended, had started out, and that he was afraid of coming to pieces. Nay, he even went so low as his feet, and felt sure he was going home to change a tight boot. But when he saw Eccleston-bridge in sight he was at the end of all his conjectures, and ventured to ask Harry whither they were going.

'You'll see all in good time,' said Harry, in so sad a voice that Edward was glad he had gone with him, for he was afraid he was making straight for Thames-bank to throw himself in.

So on and on they went, down the great social desert that begins beyond Warwick-square, and perhaps even on this side of it, and that stupid Edward did not know whither they were going till they came to a long, straggling street, half shops, half lodging-houses, and when he looked up at its name he saw they had got into Lupus-street.

'Why, here we are in Lupus-street!' he said. 'What a long street it must be!—it meets one everywhere.'

'Yes,' said Harry moodily; 'I know we are in Lupus-street. This is where I wanted to come. I wanted to call on the Prices.'

'Why, you called there yesterday,' said Edward.

'I know I did,' said Harry; 'and I promised them to go back as soon as I had got some information; and now I have got it, and am going to tell it.'

If Harry had been sharp, he would have seen that both he and Edward were great objects of curiosity to Mr. Leek, close to whose shop at the corner they were standing; but as Harry and Edward were both in love, and love is blind, they saw nothing. But Mr. Leek saw them, and pointed them out to Mrs. Leek.

'Look, Jemima Ann, there's the two young gents I told you of. There they go, as cool as cowcumbers, to call upon Miss Price, in the broad light of day.'

'Then they may spare themselves the trouble,' said Mrs. Leek; 'for I seen Miss Price go out for a walk with her sister a while back.'

But as Harry did not know this, and as Edward could not stop him, they walked up to the door, and, when it was opened, all they

could learn from Betsy was that Miss Edith and her sister had gone out for a walk after they had had their tea.

‘How provoking!’ said Harry, with a most injured air.

‘Whatever you have to tell about the situation will keep ~~very~~ well till to-morrow, I suppose?’ said Edward.

‘So it will. What a fool I am!’ said Harry. So he left ~~this~~ card, which Betsy, whose fingers were dirty with scrubbing, took in a corner of her apron; and after begging her to tell Miss Price ~~that~~ that he would call to-morrow afternoon, as he had something ~~particular~~ to say, the two friends walked off again to dine at the club.

‘I feel much easier now,’ said Harry; and for the rest of ~~the~~ evening he was tolerably cheerful.

‘I am sure I am,’ said Edward. ‘I declare, for ever so long, I could not make out what was the matter with you.’

## CHAPTER LV.

### EDITH PRICE ACCEPTS A SITUATION.

THAT night, before going to bed, Lady Charity wrote the following note to Edith Price:

‘No. — Eaton-place,  
‘June 6th, 1870.

‘Lady Charity presents her compliments to Miss Price, and having been informed by a friend that Miss Price is anxious to undertake the duties of a governess, will be happy to see Miss Price, if she can make it convenient to call at this address to-morrow morning between eleven and twelve o’clock.’

She sent it by hand, so that she might be sure that Edith had received it. I hope no one will cry out that Lady Charity was wrong in presenting her compliments to an intending governess, and that she should rather have written, ‘Lady Charity desires that Miss Edith Price,’ &c., for, in our opinion, she was quite right to word her note as we have given it.

The note was put into Edith’s hands, just as she was going to bed, by Betsy, who had taken it in.

‘A letter for you, Miss Edith, left by a footman with a powdered ’ead.’

Edith took it and read it. ‘This is Mr. Fortescue’s doing,’ she said. ‘How very kind of him!’

Then she went to bed, and dreamt she was teaching at least twenty little boys and girls to read and write and talk French; but when they all began to practise their scales at once, the discord was so dreadful that she sprang bolt upright in bed, and said, ‘Dear me! thank heaven it was only a dream.’

Early next morning Edith told her mother of Lady Charity’s note.

‘It is very kind of Mr. Fortescue,’ said Mrs. Price. ‘No doubt Lady Charity is one of his great friends.’

‘I suppose she is,’ said Edith.

‘You must mind, Edith, that the family to which you may be going is one of respectability and position,’ said Mrs. Price.

‘You may rely upon that, mother,’ said Edith, as she left the room to put on her velvet jacket.

It did not take her long to walk from Lupus-street to Eaton-place, and Edith got there at half-past eleven. She was admitted at once, and found Lady Charity in the library on the ground-floor.

Now it must be confessed that, though Lady Charity had been prepared to see a pretty girl, she was not prepared for such loveliness as Edith Price presented. She saw at once that she must be a dangerous rival to any woman, and quite agreed with Amicia in thinking that the sooner she and Harry Fortescue were parted the better.

‘I have heard, Miss Price,’ she began, ‘that you are anxious to undertake a situation as governess in a gentleman’s family.’

‘Yes, I am,’ said Edith, who did not like to mention Harry Fortescue’s name in the matter, or to ask how Lady Charity had heard it.

‘I have it in my power,’ said Lady Charity, ‘to offer you a very advantageous position in a family who reside in Norfolk; but it is absolutely necessary that you should accept my offer at once, as the situation cannot be kept open.’

‘I am ready to go as soon as you please,’ said Edith.

‘Very well, then,’ said Lady Charity, with a kindly smile, ‘that will simplify matters very much. And now let me hear something of your qualifications for the post.’

So Edith gave an account of herself, how she had spent the last four years in France, and so spoke that language fluently. And Lady Charity asked her a few questions in that language, which she answered in far better French than Lady Charity could command.

‘Music is also essential,’ said Lady Charity. ‘Would you mind playing me something on that instrument?’ pointing to a piano in the corner of the room.

So Edith sat down, and after she had played parts of several pieces to Lady Charity’s satisfaction—for she was a far better judge of music than of French, as is the case with many elderly ladies—she said,

‘Well, my dear Miss Price, I really think I shall be able conscientiously to recommend you for the situation of which I spoke, and—’ But before she could finish her sentence the door opened, and ‘Lady Sweetapple’ was announced.

The fact was, that Amicia could neither bear the suspense

of waiting to know whether her scheme would succeed, nor the curiosity which she felt to behold the woman whom she fancied to be her rival. A sudden thought had seized her, and she fancied that if she came in, as if by accident, during the interview of Edith Price with Lady Charity, she would have an opportunity of judging whether her suspicions were well founded, and E. P. really so formidable as to render it necessary that she should be sent out of town. At any rate, there she was, and Lady Charity had to make the best of her.

'My dear Lady Sweetapple,' said Lady Charity, 'I am so glad you have come. This is the Miss Price of whom I spoke to you yesterday, and just as you came in I was about to conclude an engagement for her to enter into the Blickling family as governess. I am quite satisfied with my interview; but as my French is not nearly so good as yours, would you mind speaking a little to Miss Price in French?'

'Certainly not,' said Amicia, who had been struck at once with Edith's beauty, and who was overjoyed at the prospect of sending her out of town as soon as possible. If any of you ask why Edith Price did not wear her veil down, we are sure we cannot tell. For ourselves, we would never engage as a governess any woman, young or old, who wore her veil down. Suppose she turned out to be the pig-faced lady, and frightened all the little children of the family into which she entered out of their seven senses. We will not go so far as to say that none but ugly women wear their veils down, but only that Edith did not wear hers down, and that she was very lovely. Amicia, therefore, had every opportunity of seeing how dangerous she might be if any young man took a fancy to her.

Then Amicia and Edith began to speak French, which the former Miss 'Smeess' spoke like a native. After this had lasted a little time, Amicia said,

'This is very pure French—a good choice of words and an excellent accent. I am quite satisfied with Miss Price's French.'

'Then we may conclude it as settled,' said Lady Charity. 'By the way, Miss Price, there is one thing more to ask. Would you have any objection to tell us a little of your family and your past life?'

So poor Edith had to begin from the beginning: how her father had a college living and taken pupils, and been drowned; how his death left his family in destitute circumstances; how the kindness of friends had supported them in France; and how, when her education had been completed, she had come to London, not long ago, to try to get a situation as a governess.

'A very sad story, indeed,' said Lady Charity; 'it quite in my heart bleed to hear it. I would not have asked for it, had it been absolutely necessary.'

'I know it is necessary,' said Edith. 'But now will you tell



W. H. P. del.

Edmund Evans, sc.

LADY CHARITY PROVIDES A SITUATION FOR EDITH PRICE





something about the family into which you propose so kindly should accept a situation ?'

'The Blicklings are a family of the first distinction,' said Lady Charity, 'and Mrs. Blickling is a cousin of my own. I am sure you will accept the situation. The salary will be a hundred pounds a year.' Edith's eyes glistened when she heard the sum named. 'Are you really going to earn all that money for herself by her own industry ?'

'You said,' Lady Charity went on, 'that your father took pupils. Tell me the names of any of those pupils ?'

Edith Price hesitated a little at this question ; she knew that there was no harm in mentioning the names of Harry Fortescue and Vernon, and yet she did not like to name them.

'You must be able to remember some of them,' said Lady Charity.

Edith seemed so stupid not to be able to answer so simple a question that Edith was forced to say,

'Two of my father's pupils were Mr. Harry Fortescue and Vernon, whom, perhaps, you may know.'

'You know them intimately,' said Lady Charity ; 'but I have often heard of them and seen them in society.'

'They have been very kind to my mother, and to all of us,' said Lady Charity.

'I think,' said Lady Charity, 'as you seem peculiarly fitted for the position which Mrs. Blickling offers, that I may close with you.'

'The only condition is, that you should go down to Norfolk as soon as possible. How soon could you go ?'

'I can go at once,' said Edith. 'To-morrow, if you please.'

'Let it be to-morrow, then,' said Lady Charity. 'I will write to Mrs. Blickling to-night, and tell her to send to meet you at the house.'

After fuller explanations, with which we need not trouble ourselves, it was arranged that Edith Price should be Mrs. Blickling's governess ; and with many thanks to Lady Charity for her assistance, she took her departure, in better spirits than she had been for a very long time.

As soon as she was gone, Lady Charity said to Amicia, 'There, my dear, that is settled ; and now tell me what you think of her. I call her lovely.'

'I think she is very pretty,' said Amicia. 'Far too good-looking for a governess ; but, to my taste, rather too dark. But I am going to Norfolk, for some people like dark young persons.' 'Now, look at me, Amicia,' said Lady Charity ; and accordingly she looked at her kindly face.

'You see now, I hope,' said Lady Charity, 'what all your fuss comes to, and what a mare's nest you have built for your-

self. This poor girl is the daughter of Mr. Fortescue's former tutor, and that's why he and Mr. Vernon take such an interest in her. Are you not ashamed of yourself ?

'Not at all,' said Amicia. 'It is one thing to take an interest, and another to be constantly calling on a young person, and such an attractive young person as this. Then there is the missing cheque, and the advertisement, and the going to church, not to mention Harry Fortescue's manner whenever even the name of Price is mentioned. No ; I am not at all ashamed of myself, and I shall be ever grateful to you, darling Lady Charity, for dispatching Miss Edith Price so quickly and so cleverly to Norfolk. I hope she will stay there a very long while.'

'I am sure I hope so,' said Lady Charity ; 'for I feel as though I were sending to Mrs. Blickling for a governess one of the most charming young persons possible.'

'I need no farther proof as to her dangerous qualities,' said Amicia, 'than the fact that you fall in love with the young person as soon as you see her. I think I am ten times more jealous of her since I have seen her.'

'Pray don't be silly, dear Amicia,' said Lady Charity. 'These are all idle fancies. Don't you see, that having found out a perfectly natural reason for Mr. Fortescue's attention to the Price family, you ought to be quite convinced that there is nothing farther between Mr. Fortescue and Miss Price ?'

'No, I do not see it,' said Amicia doggedly, rising to go away. 'But, dear Lady Charity, do see that this young person goes down to Norfolk to-morrow.'

'I will do my best,' said Lady Charity ; and with this comfort Lady Sweetapple took her departure.

'I wonder what Harry Fortescue can see in such a black-looking creature,' said Amicia, as she stepped into her carriage. 'But there is no accounting for tastes.'

In a few minutes she was in her boudoir in Lowndes-street, in consultation with Mrs. Crump as to the approaching Ascot campaign.

'Mamma dear,' said Edith, almost bursting into her mother's room, and throwing herself on the invalid's bed, 'I have seen such a charming old lady, and she has promised me a situation as governess at a hundred pounds a year. Is not that nice ?'

'I shall be very sorry to part with you, Edith,' said Mrs. Price, after Edith had told her story. 'What I shall do without you, God only knows ; but He knows best, and it is clearly your duty to accept this offer.'

'I can't bear to think of going,' said Edith, 'and Mary is much on my mind ; but I have settled that you must have a maid of your own to attend on you and go out with Mary, and the first thing that I shall do with my money will be to pay that maid.'

'Just like you, Edith—always so considerate. Affliction has made you thoughtful before your years.'

'O, mother!' said Edith, 'I am so glad to be going, and so sorry to go and leave you and Mary and Mrs. Nicholson, and,' she added, with a little pause, 'Mr. Fortescue. He will never believe it, for he said only yesterday he was quite sure I should never get a situation to suit me.'

'The great reason why you should take it,' said Mrs. Price, 'is, that it will lessen our obligations to those two noble-minded young men.'

'Yes,' said Edith, 'I think Mr. Fortescue is very noble-minded, and so kind and considerate.'

'In those respects you are his equal,' said Mrs. Price, fondly kissing her daughter. Then she added sadly,

'You will think of us often, Edith, when you are down in Norfolk; and of the old rectory house at Bourton, and the church, and your father's grave, and of the cypress we planted over it before we left. If I could only rest at last under that tree!'

'Mother, darling mother!' said Edith, 'don't break my heart. Of course I shall think of you and of him, and of all you have said, and still more of the good darling mother you have ever been to me. Don't break my heart, mother;' and then she threw her arms round her mother's neck, and burst into tears.

'I did not mean to hurt your feelings, Edith,' said Mrs. Price. 'I never thought you would forget. Forgive me for what I said. Invalids, you know, are always peevish.'

'You are always patient, mother dear,' said Edith, kissing her again and again, and then rushing up to her own room to stifle her tears.

'I never considered how painful it is to lose those we love,' said Edith. 'Now I must break it to Mary.'

'Mary dear, where are you?' she said. And when Mary came, Edith told her story, and Mary would not believe that she must lose Edith so soon; and there was more crying and more kissing, and then the two sisters sat, hand in hand, the very pictures of grief. How long they had remained in that position they knew not, till a knock came at the door, and Betsy's voice said,

'Miss Edith, Mr. Fortescue is in the back drawing-room, and wishes to see you.'

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## THE OLD ROOM

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Do the moonbeams glint through its windows now,  
Bright as they did of yore,  
To light the cluster of lily-bells,  
The lilies I tend no more ?  
Does the jasmine climb round the casement yet,  
With one vagrant tendril peeping,  
To see, deep sunk in her downy nest,  
The mistress who train'd it sleeping ?  
And O, what hangs o'er the mantel now,  
Whence a calm proud face look'd down,  
With lips that could smile so tenderly,  
With eyes that could flash or frown ?

What volumes range on the oaken shelf,  
Where Tennyson sang of old,  
Where Dickens stood with his genial laugh,  
Where Carlyle's grand thunder roll'd ?  
Does order rule on the table now,  
Where papers were wont to heap,  
Mid fair quaint toys and open books,  
With a rosebud the place to keep ?  
And in the old gilded secrétaire  
Have they found in the hid recess  
The token whose meaning, well I ween,  
There is none save I can guess ?

Death's heavy hand struck sudden and strong  
All the links of a life to sever ;  
And we were parted, my room and I,  
Were parted, and O, for ever !  
It is all such a trifle ; and there is enough,  
Too real, God knows, in the world ;  
No time to pause to snatch at a leaf,  
In the wild life-current hurl'd !  
Only just sometimes, when I dream awhile,  
In the midnight when all is still,  
I muse how my room is looking then,  
In the moonbeams weird and chill.

# BELGRAVIA

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AUGUST 1872

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## TO THE BITTER END

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

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### CHAPTER XXV. MRS. HARCROSS AT HOME.

SIX o'clock on a brilliant June afternoon, and Mrs. Harcross at home. The great drawing-rooms in Mastodon-crescent are filled to the brim and running over with fluttering creatures in airy raiment: the rainbow sheen of silk and satin—the latest devices in Parisian millinery—transform the gorgeous rooms into a kind of human flower-garden; in contrast with these brilliant specimens of the human species, the very exotics in the conservatory opening out of the inner drawing-room pale their splendour. How poor and dingy a being then does the lord of creation appear, in his invisible-blue morning-coat and quaker-like drab trousers, as he is hustled hither and thither amidst this many-coloured crowd! For the last two hours Mrs. Harcross's dearest friends have been fluttering in and out, so enthusiastic in their expressions of rapture on seeing her, that a bystander might fairly conclude that they had suffered an enforced severance of years. There are a few notabilities sprinkled about the rooms, people whom other people struggle to see, although inspection generally results in disappointment. Mrs. Harcross never permits herself to be at home without this sprinkling of notabilities. They have their function, like the satellites of distinguished planets, and she would feel herself small and mean without them. There has been some music, chiefly of the classical order; and in an off room downstairs there is a perennial supply of ices, and tea and coffee, which knights-errant, in very short coats and with flowers in their buttonholes, carry upstairs with a perseverance that might

almost prepare them for a course of treadmill. What with the classical music, the buzz of many tongues, sometimes in a polyglot jargon—for at least a third of Mrs. Harcross's visitors are foreigners—the heat, and the perfume of stephanotis from the conservatory, there have been a few stifled yawns, but, guilty as the delinquents feel, no one has seen them; and as the crowd begins to thin a little, the airy toilets melting away silently, like the sea foam receding from the shore, Mrs. Harcross feels that this particular Wednesday afternoon has been a success. Herr Thumpanthunter has been grander than usual in his exposition of Sebastian Bach; Mr. Rorhedd, the great naturalist, has given one of his liveliest descriptions of an interesting discovery of extinct mammalia on the coast of Peru; Lord Shawm, the evangelical lay-preacher, has held his own particular circle rapt and breathless in a corner of the back drawing-room, while he urged them to have their lamps ready. At a quarter-past six the two large drawing-rooms are empty, and Mrs. Harcross has flung herself wearily into a low arm-chair by one of the open windows. The wide stucco balcony is full of flowers, and slim iron pilasters, with Australian clematis and passion flowers climbing up them, break the view of the tall straight line of houses over the way.

One of her guests still lingered, the indefatigable Weston. He was standing by the low mantelpiece, glancing over his shoulder at the reflection of his faultless morning coat—the very smallest thing in coats—a mere segment of a coat, as it were.

‘Trying, isn’t it, this kind of afternoon?’ he remarked at last, by way of commentary upon a profound sigh from Augusta.

‘I don’t know that I ever felt so completely worn out,’ replied the lady. ‘There were so many second-rate people, such bustle and clatter—second-rate people are always noisy.’

‘Do you think so?’ demanded Weston with his languid air—the stereotyped languor, and quite different from Mr. Harcross’s languor, which had at least the merit of originality—‘do you think so? I thought your heavy swells were noisiest—royal dukes, and that kind of thing. I fancied the afternoon was a great success. Lord Shawm was in very good form: how the girls thronged round him in his corner! It was quite a blockade of the back drawing-room door. And Rorhedd was uncommonly lively. Did you see him flirting with that girl in pink, the prettiest girl in the room? I’ve observed that your elderly scientific party has always a correct eye for that kind of thing.’

‘I didn’t see anybody,’ Augusta replied, rather peevishly; ‘I was tired when the thing began: and I have no one to help me. I believe Hubert makes a point of being away.’

‘He had a parliamentary case on at three, hadn’t he?’ inquired Weston, sticking his glass in his eye, and taking another backward



glance at the reflection of his coat. He began to think there really was a wrinkle at the back of the left armhole.

‘I’m sure I don’t know; of course there’s nothing easier than to say he has a parliamentary case, when I want him to be at home.’

‘Come, come, Augusta,’ said Weston, in a soothing tone, ‘I’m sure Harcross is quite a model husband,—in his own fashion.’

Mrs. Harcross turned on him more angrily than he ever remembered her to have done in all their intercourse.

‘In his own fashion!’ she exclaimed; ‘what do you mean by that? Have you ever heard me complain of him?’

‘I really imagined you were complaining of him just now.’

‘Not at all. If I complained of anything, it was of that herd of people. I think I never had so many that I don’t care a straw about knowing.’

‘Ah, my dear, if we could go through life with only the people we do care about knowing, how very small a world we might live in! But I fancy I have an expansive soul: I really like everybody.’

They lapsed into silence.

‘A screw loose somewhere about our friend Harcross,’ mused Weston Vallory, ‘but it seems rather too soon for me to put my oar in.’

He watched his cousin as she lay back in her chair, gazing absently at the flowers in the balcony. An occasional brougham rolled swiftly by, and now and then there came the slow tramp of a foot passenger. The dinner-party traffic had not yet begun, and at this time of a summer evening Mastodon-crescent was quiet as the grave.

‘O, by the way,’ said Weston, after a long pause, ‘I brought you something this afternoon.’

‘Did you?’ Mrs. Harcross inquired, without turning her head; ‘new music, I suppose?’

‘No, a print for your portfolio; rather a rare one, I believe. A proof-engraving of a picture by Sir Thomas Lawrence; one of his latest.’

‘You’re very good,’ Mrs. Harcross said, with a slight yawn; ‘I don’t pretend to care much for that kind of engraving. I like the German school so much better. But your present shall have a place in my portfolio. Where is it?’

‘I left it in the refreshment-room; I’ll send for it, if you’ll allow me.’ He rang, and dispatched a servant in quest of a roll of paper, left somewhere in the cloak-room. Mrs. Harcross had not ceased from her contemplation of the ferns and geraniums in the balcony when the parcel was brought. Weston unrolled it carefully, and came to the window with it.

‘Rather a good face, isn’t it?’ he asked, standing at his cousin’s

side, holding the engraving up to the light. 'A great deal of character about it.'

Augusta looked up with the air of being supremely bored by the whole business, but at sight of the picture started to her feet with a cry of surprise.

'Weston!' she exclaimed, 'don't you know what it is?'

'A very charming portrait of a very charming woman, I've no doubt,' he answered carelessly, without taking any notice of his cousin's astonishment.

'You've been in Hubert's chambers, haven't you?' she asked sharply.

'Yes, three or four times. Mr. Harcross has not shown me warm an appreciation of my visits as to induce me to go there oftener.'

'But you have been there, and you must know that picture!'

'Upon my honour, I cannot perceive the faintest connection between the two ideas.'

'Nonsense, Weston; there is only one picture in Hubert's room, the portrait over the chimneypiece, and that print is a copy of it.'

'Really, now!' said Weston, with a most natural air of surprise. 'Yes, I do remember rather a striking picture in Harcross's room. I concluded it was something he picked up in Wardour-street, or at Christie's, perhaps; likely to catch a man's eye as rather a nice bit of colour. But I had quite forgotten it. Yet I had a notion, when I found this thing in a portfolio of old-fashioned engravings of Tombs's, that I had seen the face somewhere before. This is a portrait of Mrs. Mostyn, the actress, renowned in comedy before the days of Mrs. Nesbitt. You are too young even to have heard of her.'

'An actress!' exclaimed Augusta, very pale.

'Yes, here's her name at the back, written in pencil: "Portrait of Mrs. Mostyn, as Viola in *Twelfth Night*, painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence." Why, my dear Augusta, how pale and scared you look! One would think you had made a most appalling discovery. Mrs. Mostyn has been dead thirty years; Tombs told me all about her; you can't possibly be jealous of her!'

'Jealous!' cried Augusta, with a look that ought to have astonished him. 'What a fool you are, Weston!' and then in quite a different tone, and to herself rather than to him, she repeated, 'actress!'

She was silent for some moments after this, and then turned to her cousin suddenly, and said,

'You heard all about this Mrs. Mostyn, you say. Was she a good woman?'

'Good is such a very wide word, Augusta. She was very charming, Tombs tells me, and extremely good-natured.'



Louis Haard, del.

Edmund Evans sc.

THE ENGRAVED PORTRAIT.



‘You know what I mean, Weston,’ Mrs. Harcross exclaimed impatiently. ‘Was she a respectable woman?’

Weston shrugged his shoulders.

‘I hardly think the dramatic profession went in for respectability seriously thirty years ago,’ he said. ‘The women were handsomer than any we have now, but I believe their reputations leaned rather the other way. Of course there were a few brilliant exceptions. As for this Mrs. Mostyn, Tombs’s account was rather vague. It was not very long before the public, but during her brief career was the rage. She was a married woman, I suppose, or else why call her ‘Mrs.’? but Mr. Mostyn appears to have been a somewhat mythical character. She had numerous admirers among the men out of town of that day—men who wore straps to their pantaloons, and incredible hats, you know, Augusta, and sometimes even turned back their wristbands—and is reputed to have finished her career by running away with one of them.’

‘Indeed!’

‘Yes, and one of the worst among them, but Tombs had forgotten the man’s name. He was quite clear about the main facts, however. The lady was spirited away one fine morning, during the run of a new comedy at the Coliseum Theatre, to the consternation of the manager, and was seen no more. She is supposed to have died abroad a few years later. I asked what became of Mostyn, or what Mostyn said to the elopement; but he appears not to have expressed any opinion; in point of fact, no one seems to have known Mostyn. Curious, isn’t it? However, the lady may have been a widow when she made her début.’

Augusta had taken the engraving from her cousin’s hands, and was looking at it in silence for some time after he had told her all he could tell about the subject of the picture. Weston strolled out on the balcony, amused himself by some small horticultural experiments, plucking off a faded leaf or two, and coaxing the tendrils of the clematis into a more graceful twist, but he kept his eye upon his cousin nevertheless. She seemed to emerge from a profound reverie by and by, rose from her low chair, and threw the picture on a side-table with her most indifferent manner, and then joined Weston on the balcony.

‘Thanks for the engraving,’ she said, ‘I have no doubt it is a very good one; I daresay Hubert picked up the original portrait very much in the manner you suggest, at a time when he was not rich enough to invest largely in pictures. Hark! isn’t that his step the Crescent?’

Weston peered over a stucco vase filled with scarlet geranium.

‘Yes, I perceive Mr. Harcross half-a-dozen doors off. What a correct ear you have, and how I envy Harcross the faculty of inquiring such solicitude!’

‘Do you?’ Augusta demanded coolly. ‘I suppose, when you marry, your wife will know your step, unless she has the misfortune to be deaf.’

‘An alliance with deafness is a calamity I am very sure to escape,’ replied Mr. Vallory sententiously.

‘Indeed!’

‘Because I mean never to marry at all.’

‘O, I daresay you’ll change your mind on that point when you meet the right person.’

‘My dear Augusta, it is my unhappiness to have met the right person!’

The look, the tone, were unmistakable; nor was Mrs. Harcross the kind of woman to affect unconsciousness.

‘If you are going to take that sort of tone, Weston,’ she said, with a freezing look, ‘I shall be under the unpleasant necessity of shutting my doors upon my first cousin.’

‘O, I see. A tame cat must never show temper; his existence must be one continuous purr. Forgive me, Augusta; I promise not to offend again; but you must never talk of my wife in the potential mood. There can be no such person. I am a confirmed bachelor, and have no higher vocation, nor aspire to anything higher, than to be your slave.’

*This* was a kind of homage to which Mrs. Harcross had no objection. She gave Weston her hand—a very cold hand on this sultry summer afternoon—and gave him a smile that was almost as cold.

‘You have always been very good,’ she said; ‘I should be extremely sorry if anything were to interrupt our friendship.’

She was quite sincere in this. Weston was really useful to her; fetched and carried; hunted lions for her; kept her posted up in that superficial knowledge of passing events without which conversation is impossible; supplemented her own reading, for which the claims of society scarcely left her one clear hour a-day, by his much wider reading; did a hundred small things for her, in fact, which she sometimes felt ought to have been done by her husband. But Weston Vallory always seemed to have so much more leisure than Mr. Walgrave-Harcross.

Walgrave-Harcross came in almost immediately upon the reconciliation of the cousins, and flung himself into a chair with a suppressed yawn.

‘Not begun to dress, Augusta?’ he said, in a surprised tone; ‘Weston must have been uncommonly interesting. Are you aware it’s seven o’clock? I never yet knew you to dress under an hour; and in all my calculations I generally allow you something more like two.’

‘I’ll say good-bye,’ said Weston; ‘I don’t think I’ve been an



obstacle to the toilet, have I, Augusta? You rarely stand on ceremony with me.'

'Not at all. I don't think I shall go out to-night.'

'Not to "dear Lady Basingstoke's," Augusta? I thought you and she adored each other.'

'I would rather disappoint any one than Julia Basingstoke,' replied Mrs. Harcross; 'but I have an intolerable headache. Don't stand staring at me in that pitying way, Weston. I only want a little rest. You can go to the dinner without me, Hubert. I know Julia is very anxious to have you there.'

Weston shook hands and departed, curious and thoughtful. 'There's something queer about that picture,' he said to himself, as he walked Charing-crosswards; 'and I wouldn't give very much for Mr. Harcross's domestic felicity this evening. Yet it can hardly be jealousy—of a woman who died thirty years ago—unless that portrait in his chambers is an accidental likeness of some one he has cared about. Perhaps *that* is Augusta's suspicion. Yet, if that were the notion, why should she be so strangely affected at finding out the history of the picture? It's a queer business, altogether; but I'm very glad I came across that engraving at Tombs's, it may serve me as a fulcrum!'

'I'm sorry you can't go to the dinner,' said Mr. Harcross, with his eyes half-closed. He would sleep for ten minutes or so at will, and arise from such brief slumber like an intellectual giant refreshed. 'Was the herd larger than usual, and more than usually oppressive?'

'I have had rather a fatiguing afternoon; and as you can never give me any assistance—'

'My dear Augusta, were I the idlest man in the world, I should shirk that kind of thing. I have not the knack of seeming enchanted to see a host of uninteresting people. I rather like a good ponderous dinner—people brighten wonderfully amidst the clatter of knives and forks and the popping of champagne corks; and if one has a good cook, as we happily have, one sees one's friends at their best under those genial influences. But an afternoon party—a crowd of meanderers circulating inanely, buzzing like so many gad-flies, a little music, a little literature, a little science, a little religion, a little scandal, all going on at once in the most distracting manner—upon my word, fashionable woman must be a devoted creature if she can stand that kind of thing. But had I been ever so willing, I could not have been at home this afternoon; we had a field-day in the committee-room.'

Augusta was standing by the open window, pale as her muslin dress. Should she talk to him now, or wait till he returned from the dinner? That which she had to say to him was of an agitating nature; she, who was ordinarily so serene and emotionless a creature, felt that she might hardly be mistress of herself when once

that subject was broached between those two. Would it not be best to wait till night, when there would be no hazard of a servant coming in suddenly while they were talking? She looked across at the clock on the chimney-piece—a quarter-past seven; and at eight Mr. Harcross was due at her dear friend Lady Basingstoke's. She had promised her dear Julia that he should come; and she knew that her dear Julia relied upon him as the intellectual Samson who was to sustain the weight of a somewhat heavy banquet; for dear Julia's guests were exalted, but dull. If they were both absent, people might talk—indeed, if even one were wanting, people might talk—since she herself had been seen that afternoon in all her accustomed brilliancy. Mrs. Harcross shivered at the thought that her dear friends might lay their heads together, as the phrase goes, and speculate about her—might even conjecture that she and her husband had quarrelled. She knew that was the general opinion when a wife, from any unexplained cause, failed to come up to time.

'I have a distracting headache, Hubert,' she said; 'but perhaps I had better go with you. I know dear Julia depends upon us.'

'Very well, my dear,' murmured Mr. Harcross, without opening his eyes; 'go by all means, if you really think you can dress in three quarters of an hour. Or couldn't you wear that peach-coloured and white thing you have on? It's uncommonly pretty.'

Mrs. Harcross looked down at her mauve-silk train and India muslin overskirt, with a contemptuous shrug.

'I wonder you can propose anything so absurd, Hubert, when I have been seen in this dress by at least a hundred people this very afternoon, Julia Basingstoke amongst them.'

'In that case you had better make haste. I can dress in twenty minutes.'

Mrs. Harcross took the engraving from the table where she had thrown it, rolled it up carefully, and carried it away to her dressing-room, where she locked it up in one of her private drawers before she rang for Tullion, the maid. At five minutes before eight she came downstairs in her evening splendour, radiant in pearl-gray satin, and airy tulle, with great bunches of crimson azaleas gleaming amidst the cloudy draperies, and a coronet of azaleas and diamonds on her dark hair. If there were any glory in being the husband of one of the handsomest women in London, Mr. Harcross certainly enjoyed that distinction.

But there was no elation in his countenance to-night, as he stood at the foot of the stairs and calmly surveyed the splendid figure descending towards him. If his wife's splendour and beauty evoked any feeling in his mind it was wonder—wonder that any human creature of average intelligence could be satisfied with a life so empty—this perpetual shifting of gorgeous raiment, this house which was never a home.

Mrs. Harcross had usually plenty to say for herself, in a certain commonplace way; but to-night she was silent, though the drive to the Tyburnian district, where the widowed Lady Basingstoke had set up her tent, was rather a long one. Mr. Harcross was tired, and leant back in the carriage, without any disturbing considerations about his 'back hair,' and closed his eyes. He was not offended by his wife's silence, nor did it inspire him with those vague apprehensions which some men are apt to feel under such circumstances, a foreboding of curtain lectures to come. He concluded that 'the herd' had been troublesome, and this particular Wednesday afternoon a failure.

The evening at Lady Basingstoke's was as other evenings. Mr. Harcross talked a good deal and talked well. In the brief pauses of his life, between the day's labour and the evening's pleasure, a man may reflect upon the emptiness of this kind of existence, and tell himself that it is all vanity; but once in the ring, with all the light and sweetness of society around him, his spirits are apt to rise. The intoxication is of the highest, perhaps, but pleasant enough while it lasts. Nobody at Lady Basingstoke's could have supposed that Mr. Harcross was tired of life.

Dear Julia thanked her dear Augusta with effusion at parting.

'So good of you to come. I never saw Sir Thomas Heavitree so agreeable; he and Mr. Harcross seem to get on so well together. It was quite a relief to see him so much amused.'

'I'm very glad we were able to come, Julia. Hubert had a committee before the Lords to-day. I was half afraid he would be too much exhausted to dine out.'

'But he is so wonderfully clever, and takes everything so coolly. I should fancy he could hardly know what fatigue means. But *you* are not looking well to-night, Augusta. I observed it at dinner. I never saw you so pale.'

'I daresay it's the colour of my dress—rather an old colour, isn't it? I told Bouffante so, but she insisted upon my having it.'

'Your dress is lovely, dear, as it always is. But you really are not looking well.'

With these and many other expressions of sympathy the friends parted, and Mrs. Harcross went off, with Hubert in her wake, feeling tolerably satisfied with his evening. The party had been rather a dull business perhaps, but he had been the source and centre of any brief flashes of brilliancy that had enlivened it. This kind of social success was one of the prizes that he had set himself to win, or rather an appanage of his professional position. He had nothing better to look forward to, only to mount a little higher upon the ladder which he had been slowly ascending from his youth upwards, and every rung of which was familiar to him. Were he to become Lord Chancellor, life could give him very little more than it gave him now. He had reason to be content.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

MR. AND MRS. HARCROSS BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER.

‘WILL you come into my room for a few minutes’ talk before you go upstairs, Hubert, I want to ask you a question?’

Mrs. Harcross made this request on the threshold of her morning-room, just as her husband was turning towards that secondary staircase which led to his dressing-room.

‘I am quite at your service, my dear Augusta. This is just the time in the evening when I have the least possible inclination for sleep. What is it about? Another dinner at home, made up on purpose for Sir Thomas Heavitree? I fancied you were meditating something in the carriage, you were so unusually silent. You didn’t even say anything about Lady Heavitree’s cheese-coloured moire, with satin upholsterer’s work about the skirt, which I really thought would provoke your powers of ridicule.’

He strolled after his wife into the pretty chintz-draped sitting-room, where a moderator lamp shed its chaste light on a table heaped with new books and periodicals. The easiest chairs, the most perfect appliances for writing in all the house, were to be found here. Mr. Harcross dropped into his favourite chair by the fireplace, which was artistically screened at this season by a little grove of ferns.

‘I was not thinking of anybody’s dress to-night,’ Mrs. Harcross said moodily.

‘Indeed! then I may fairly conjecture that, like Louis XV. when he didn’t hunt, your majesty did nothing.’

‘You are very polite. I hope my ideas do sometimes soar above toilets, even in society, where one is not supposed to think very seriously. But to-night my mind was absorbed by a somewhat painful subject.’

‘I’m sorry to hear that. I certainly thought you were confoundedly quiet. Is it anything wrong in the house? Does Fluman want to better himself?’

Fluman was a butler of unusual accomplishments, who had assisted Mr. and Mrs. Harcross to maintain their establishment at its high-pressure point of excellence.

‘How can you be so absurd, Hubert? As if I should allow myself to be worried by anything of that kind!’

‘But I can’t conceive a greater loss than Fluman. We should collapse utterly if he left us in the middle of a season. I’m sure at the beginning of a dinner, when things look rather dull, I often say to myself, “Never mind, we are in the hands of Fluman;” just as in graver affairs one would say, “We are in the hands of Providence.” I think he has recondite arts in the administration of his

wines—derived from the Romans, perhaps, who cultivated dining from a more artistic point of view than we have ever attained. I have seen him warm the stupidest people into sprightliness by judicious doses of Château d'Yquem; and if conversation flags towards the close of the banquet, he can work wonders with *parfait amour* and dry curaçoa. I should consider it a domestic bereavement if he wanted to leave us. If he were to take it into his head that he was losing caste by living with a professional man, for instance, or anything of that kind.'

'When you have done talking nonsense, Hubert, I shall be very glad to speak of serious things. I suppose that is the sort of stuff with which you amuse one another in your arbitration cases.'

'There is a good deal of nonsense talked, I daresay. An arbitration case is a comfortable free-and-easy kind of affair, that pays uncommonly well. And now, my dear, what is this serious business, and why do you sit staring at me in that moody way?'

There was something in his wife's face that he had never seen there before—something that set his heart beating a little faster than usual—something that sent his thoughts back to one dreadful day in his life, the day when Grace Redmayne fell dead at his feet.

'Do you remember the day when I called on you at your chambers, Hubert?'

'Certainly; I remember your coming to the Temple one afternoon, on some important matter. Your visit was not a very startling event; of course my chambers are always open to you.'

'I saw a picture there—a portrait—which you told me was a portrait of your mother.'

'Yes; I recollect your remarking my mother's portrait. What then?'

'It really is your mother's picture, Hubert?' his wife asked, very earnestly. 'It is not an accidental likeness of any one else; of some one of whom you may have thought I should be jealous? You were not deceiving me?'

His dark face had flushed to the brow at this suggestion.

'It is not in the least like any one else,' he said; 'it is my mother's likeness.'

'Indeed! Then I think it would have been to your credit if you had been more explicit on the subject of your antecedents, when you first spoke to my father about our marriage.'

He started to his feet with a quick indignant movement; but in the next moment settled himself calmly in his favourite pose against the angle of the mantelpiece.

'I cannot quite follow your line of argument, Mrs. Harcross,' he said; 'I shall be obliged if you will make it a little clearer.'

'I had a print brought me this afternoon; an engraving of the picture in your chambers.'

‘Indeed! I did not know the picture had been engraved. I shall be very glad to secure a copy.’

‘Your mother’s name is written on the back of the engraving—it is a proof before letters—and the person who brought me the picture told me her history.’

‘May I inquire the name of the person who took so much trouble about my family affairs?’

‘I would rather not tell you that.’

‘I will not press the question. I think I can make a shrewd guess at the identity of the officious individual.’

‘There was nothing officious in the business. The person who brought me the picture—as a rare engraving worth adding to my collection—had no idea of any connection between you and the original of the portrait.’

‘Innocent person! Those fe and carriers are such simple unsuspecting creatures. And so gh this unconscious informationer’s aid, you have discovered that mother’s name was Mostyn; and that she was an actress, I pre me. Was it this appalling discovery that troubled you all the evening?’

‘Yes, Hubert. I have been very much disturbed by this discovery; and, painful as it is, still more so by your want of candour.’

‘Indeed! What would you have wished? That I should tear the plaster from a very old wound, never quite healed? That I should have lifted the curtain from a picture that I have made it the business of my life to shroud? Did I ever boast of my antecedents, Mrs. Harcross, or endeavour to exalt myself in your eyes? When I asked you to marry me, I offered you myself, with all my chances in the future. I said nothing about the past, nor can I conceive that you have anything to do with it, or the shadow of a right to call me to question about it.’

‘The story is quite true, then?’ asked Augusta, white to the lips, and with the hand that held a gauzy kerchief round her trembling visibly. ‘This Mrs. Mostyn was an actress, and your mother?’

‘She was both. She died in Italy before I was five years old; but she lived long enough for me to love her tenderly. Be good enough to bear that fact in mind when you are talking of her.’

‘And the rest of the story is equally correct, I conclude—the lady closed her career by an elopement?’

‘She began her career, so far as I am concerned, by an elopement!’ Mr. Harcross replied coolly. ‘She ran away with my father.’

‘And was married to him, I suppose?’ his wife said breathlessly.

‘That is a question I have never been in a position to solve,’ answered Mr. Harcross. ‘If he did marry her—as I am naturally inclined to believe he did—he never acknowledged the marriage in any public manner, and—he broke h—’



The last words came slowly, and with an evident effort. 'He broke her heart,' he repeated to himself, as the force of his own words came home to him. It was not the only heart that had been so broken.

'You have not condescended to tell me the name of your father,' said Augusta after a little pause.

'O,' cried her husband, his face lighting up with a sudden flash of triumph, 'your informant—the useful person—did not enlighten you on that point! Then I decline to eke out his information. I refuse to answer the question which you ask so graciously.'

'As you please,' she said, in an icy tone. 'The name could make very little difference. It would not make the dishonour deeper, or less deep; nothing can add to or lessen the shame I have felt to-day.'

'What is my birth to you?' cried Hubert Harcross passionately. 'Have I failed in one tittle of my bargain? Have I fattened on your fortune, or wasted your substance, or given myself up to a life of pleasure, as nine men out of ten would have done in my circumstances? Do you presume to call me to account, because there is possibly the bar sinister across my escutcheon? What does it matter to you whose son I am, so long as I perform my part of the transaction which you and I entered upon three years ago? You are ashamed of my mother! Why, in heart, and mind, and everything that makes a woman beautiful, she was immeasurably your superior! She did not dress three times a day, or live only to fulfil the debtor and creditor account in her visiting-book. Indeed, she was a woman who could exist without a visiting-book or a French milliner. At the time I remember her she was the devoted slave of a scoundrel, long-suffering, tender, enduring neglect and hard usage with an angelic patience, made happy by a smile or a careless word of kindness. O God, such a life, bitter enough to stamp its cruel details on the brain of a four-year-old child! My mother was a woman of a thousand, Mrs. Harcross, although she sacrificed fame and fortune to a most consummate villain.'

For some moments Augusta Harcross sat silent, speechless with passion, and with the fleecy folds of her cloak clasped convulsively across her breast, by a hand which no longer shook—a hand which had grown rigid, as in some mortal convulsion of soul and body.

'I am obliged to you for this sudden burst of candour,' she said at last. 'It has, at any rate, the merit of novelty, and it is just as well that I should understand your appreciation of my character. I am immeasurably the inferior of an actress—a lady whose first husband was problematical, and about whose second alliance there seems hardly room for doubt; and after marrying me under false pretences, you coolly refuse to tell me your father's name, and insult me when I express my sense of shame on discovering the cruel

blot upon your birth. If you had told me this story when you asked me to be your wife, I might have overlooked the disparity of our positions, might have shut my eyes to the past—'

'That is to say, the daughter of Mr. William Vallery, sage pilot of the perilous straits of Basinghall-street, the great philosopher, and friend of insolvent mankind, might have dared to overlook the want of blue blood in the veins of her suitor. That is what you mean, I suppose. If I had sued very humbly, and shown myself supremely conscious of my abasement, you might have forgiven me for not being a scion, in the direct line, of the house of Stanley or Russell.'

For once in her life Augusta Harcross gave way to a little of womanly feeling. She rose suddenly, and went towards the door leading to her dressing-room, and then pausing on the threshold turned to her husband.

'I believe I could have forgiven you anything, Hubert, but not your confession that you have never cared for me.'

Something in her tone and look touched him, even in the midst of his indignation. He went over to the doorway, and stopped as she was leaving the room.

'Never cared for you, Augusta!' he repeated. 'What foolish stuff all this is! Why do you goad me into a furious passion, and then take what I say for gospel? Forgive me for anything as I may have said just now, it had no real meaning. I was stung the quick by your contemptuous allusions to my mother. I value you my honour, Augusta, she was a good woman. Whatever the mystery of that fatal alliance, I would pledge myself that she was guiltless. I am never likely to know the details of the story; why should you wish to be wiser than I? Let it rest with the dead. My childhood and youth were protected by a friend and father's, a man whose nature was as noble as his was base. Come, Augusta, be reasonable,' he went on, regaining something of his usual easy manner. 'Forgive me for any nonsense that anger has made me say just now, and let us drop this subject at once and for ever. This is the first time it has been broached between us. Be wise, my dear, and let it be the last.'

'As you please,' Mrs. Harcross replied coldly. 'Since no one but you could tell me could possibly lessen the pain this discovery has given me; I am not likely to torment you with any farther allusion to it. As for what you said of myself just now, I may forgive you, but I am not very likely to forget it.'

'Did I say anything very ferocious?' asked Mr. Harcross with a little careless laugh; 'pray take it all for what it was worth, Augusta. A man's tongue runs at random when he is in a hurry. Upon my word, I don't know what I said. I was very fond of my poor mother—I can see the dear face now, not what it is in

portrait, but faded and careworn as it grew before she died—and when I consider what her life might have been, and how that villain ruined it, there is no limit to my hatred of his memory. But I will never speak of him again. Shake hands, Augusta, and forget that I have been a brute.'

So there was reconciliation and peace; rather a hollow peace, perhaps, at the best, but sufficient for the preservation of the amenities of domestic life, which were not outraged that season by any obvious estrangement between Mr. and Mrs. Harcross. To the polite world they were still 'My dear Hubert' and 'My dear Augusta,' nor did footmen breaking in upon their privacy with a coal-scuttle or a salver of letters ever discover them sulky or quarrelsome. Yet Mrs. Harcross had in nowise forgotten the impulsive utterances of that night, and the bitter doubt of her husband's affection came very often between her and the joys of millinery.

Nor could she teach herself to forget that miserable discovery which Mr. Weston Vallory's good-nature had assisted her to make. There are some women in whose gentle souls the knowledge of such a blemish in the life of their best beloved would have inspired only a supreme tenderness and pity, women who would have loved Walgrave-Harcross only so much the more—who would have been so much the more proud of the reputation he had won for himself, for the sad story of his birth and childhood. But Mrs. Harcross was not such a woman. She never thought of her husband's secret without thinking how it would look in the eyes of her own particular world if it were suddenly made public—as it might be, she told herself, at any moment. She had no power of looking beyond that narrow circle in which she revolved. Westbourne-terrace bounded her world on the north, and Eccleston-square on the south; Brighton and Scarborough, Ems and Spa, were the outlying dependencies of this empire. Of the vast mass of humanity outside her sphere, of the great human race of the future, to which, should her husband win greatness, he might safely confide his fame, Mrs. Harcross thought not at all. Had her husband been an Erasmus or a Raphael she would have still been ashamed of him, with *that* blot on his escutcheon.

'I have often felt uncomfortable when my friends have asked about his people; whether he belonged to the Walgraves of Cheshire or the Hadley Walgraves, and so on,' she said to herself. 'What shall I feel now?'

Walgrave-Harcross went on his way, and made no sign. Everything prospered with him; his reputation ripened like fruit on a southern wall. He had a wonderful knack of making the most of his successes, without any appearance of self-appreciation. Men of high repute deferred to him, and acknowledged that in his own particular line he was unapproachable. The reputation was not, per-

haps, a very lofty one, he was hardly on the high-road to become Bacon, or even a Thurlow; but it was a reputation that made him a marked man at dinner-parties, and raised Mrs. Harcross day by day just a step higher on the crowded slope which leads to that Heavenly Jerusalem of 'the best society;' and this state of things would have entirely satisfied Mr. Vallory's daughter, had it not been for that bitter secret which vexed the repose of her soul.

Wide as the gulf had always been between husband and wife, it widened a little more after this, or perhaps it was rather that the severance became more perceptible. There was a kind of embarrassment in their intercourse. Hubert's manner was at once cold and apologetic. Augusta gave way to melancholy by the domestic hearth, instituted a chronic headache, and isolated herself in her morning-room with the ferns and chintz rosebuds. That splendid interior in Mastodon-crescent did not make a lively picture, when there were no guests to call forth the social instincts of Mr. and Mrs. Harcross. But they never quarrelled; on that point Augusta congratulated herself with a lofty pride.

'I have never quarrelled with my husband,' she said to herself, 'not even on that dreadful night when he deliberately insulted me.'

There were not many evenings, however, on which the house in Mastodon-crescent was thus gloomy. During the season Mr. and Mrs. Harcross rarely stayed at home together, except to receive company. There were occasions when the gentleman excused himself from going out, and sat alone in the chilly library till the small hours, cramming himself with facts and figures for the next day's business; but Augusta was not fettered by his labours, and went forth alone, radiant and splendid, to awaken envy in the breasts of less fortunate matrons.

Mrs. Harcross and Georgie Davenant became fast friends in the interval that elapsed before the damsel's marriage. Georgie was an enthusiastic worshipper of the beautiful, and that cold perfect face of Augusta's had won her heart at once. She exalted the lawyer's daughter into a heroine, and was as much flattered by Augusta's notice as if she had been one of the greatest ladies in the land. Other girls had complained of the impossibility of 'getting on' with Mrs. Harcross, but bright little Georgie warmed the statue into some kind of life. If Mrs. Harcross could be warmly interested in any subject, that subject was dress, and at such a period it was naturally a theme of no small importance in the eyes of Miss Davenant. In giving her new friend her sympathy, Mrs. Harcross perhaps regarded her less as a young lady who was going to be married than as a young lady who required a trousseau. She carried Miss Davenant about shopping with her in her own barouche, or brougham, as the weather suggested, until Mrs. Chowder, the damsel's aunt,

g herself a creature of limited ideas in comparison with Mrs. Cross, dropped into the background quietly, and contented herself with ordering *recherché* luncheons for her stylish guest, and by coinciding with all Augusta's opinions.

By Mrs. Harcross Miss Davenant was presented to the great aunt, who consented, although the pressure of business at this was something unprecedented,—the Duchess of Durham's water-Lady Doldrum's private theatricals, Mrs. St. Quintaine's fancy all crowding upon the mighty mind of the milliner within a single night,—consented, solely to oblige Mrs. Harcross, to undertake a considerable portion of Miss Davenant's outfit. It was a favour

Georgie must of course feel to the end of her life. The two kissed each other in the brougham after it was all settled. She had spent a whole afternoon at Bouffante's, turning over silks and satins, and consulting about fringes and laces, gimps and furberies, and refreshed by afternoon tea, served on a massive salver by the milliner's lacquey.

'Bouffante gives herself intolerable airs,' said Mrs. Harcross; 'her style is inimitable. No one can touch her.'

'How ever shall I bring myself to wear those dresses!' exclaimed Georgie; 'it's delightful to choose them, but, do you know, I can't see myself flourishing about in them; I should have to give up the society of Pedro, and all the rest of the animals. I have only ever worn anything but piqué or holland, so that I could go about the garden and play with the dogs just as I liked. But shew me in that mauve silk, smothered with chenille fringe, like the picture Madame Bouffante showed us, and half-a-dozen New-land puppies scrambling into my lap.'

'My dear child, you must give up those abominable dogs and that atrocious monkey when you are married. I hope you don't intend to overrun Clevedon with such creatures.'

'Not have some of my dogs to live with me!' cried Georgie, with a piteous look. 'Of course there are some that are such favourites of papa's, I couldn't rob him of them. But I must have some at Clevedon. Besides, Frank adores dogs. I wonder you don't get them. Don't be offended, Augusta, but do you know, that quiet little house of yours always seems to me rather dull because there are no dogs in it. I shouldn't appreciate the handsomest drawing-room in England, if there were not a Maltese terrier or a spaniel on the hearth-rug.'

'Perhaps you miss something else in my house,' said Augusta, with rather a moody countenance. 'I have no children, you know.' 'O, dear no, it was not that,' exclaimed Georgie, blushing, and feeling that she had wounded her friend; 'I never thought about the want of children. I have not been accustomed to children, and I am not extraordinarily fond of them. It sounds dreadful to say that,

doesn't it? I see dear little blue-eyed things in the cottages where I visit, and they seem to take to me; but, O dear, their poor little noses and pinafores are so dirty, and their fingers always wet sticky, and I can't help thinking that Newfoundland puppies are nicer.'

Sir Francis Clevedon and Miss Davenant were to be married at Kingsbury. Mrs. Harcross went down to the Bungalow to be present at the wedding, but Mr. Harcross was compelled to forego that pleasure. Every hour of his working day was appropriated just at this time, he told his wife: the thing was utterly impossible.

'It's excessively provoking, Hubert,' said Mrs. Harcross, when he demonstrated this fact to her. 'I hate going amongst a herd of strangers without my husband.'

'But your dearest Georgie and your dear Colonel are no strangers.'

'Of course not, but their friends are. It seems so unnatural for me to be there without you. However, I've promised Georgie and can't disappoint her.'

'Go, my dear Augusta, and enjoy yourself. What is that song Miss Davenant sings, "They tell me thou'rt the favoured guest"? Go, and be the favoured guest, my dear; I shall be pleased to know you are happy while I am drudging in the committee-room.'

'The session will be over soon, and then, I suppose, I shall occasionally be favoured with your society,' said Augusta, with rather a sulky air.

'Of course, my dear. But upon those occasions when I can give you my society you are apt to be afflicted by one of your headaches.'

Augusta was silent. It was not a tête-à-tête evening with her husband for which she languished. She wanted him to escort her to flower-shows and evening parties. She wanted the world to see that her marriage was a happy one.

'I am afraid people will think there is some estrangement between us, Hubert, as we are so rarely seen together,' she said.

'What does it matter what people think, so long as we are not estranged?' asked Mr. Harcross, in his coolest tone. 'Besides, we are continually being seen together. Only when you ask me to go down to Tunbridge Wells for a couple of days in the busiest part of the year, to see a young lady married, you ask an impossibility.'

'Kingsbury church,' said Augusta meditatively, 'isn't that the little village church you told me about in one of your letters from that farmhouse you went to for change of air after your illness?'

'Yes, it was King something—Kingsbury, perhaps.'

'And the name of the farmhouse—I've forgotten it. What was the name of the farmhouse, Hubert?'

'Upon my word, my dear, I've forgotten it too,' Mr. Harcross replied, after a pause. 'But what can it matter?'



‘Not very much, certainly; only if we are driving about while I am at Tunbridge Wells, I should like to have a look at the place where you stayed so long. You sent me quite a fascinating description of it, you know, in your usual off-hand way. I should like to have seen it.’

‘There is nothing worth seeing, my dear. It is a nice old-fashioned place, smothered with roses; but you may see half a dozen such in every rural neighbourhood. You’d better not trouble yourself about going to look at it. I believe the people I stayed with have left the country.’

‘How odd! I thought that kind of people were fixtures, rooted as firmly as their trees.’

‘There are tempests that tear up the strongest oaks.’

‘That sounds as if there were some romantic story connected with the people.’

‘Nothing more romantic than insolvency. The farmer had been doing badly for some years when I was there, and I believe he got tired of failure at last, and shipped himself and his family for one of the colonies.’

‘How very sad!’ exclaimed Mrs. Harcross, and the subject was exhausted.

It was not quite done with in the mind of Hubert Harcross, however. He had but a slippery hold on facts and figures that night as he sat alone, pretending to work, in his gloomy den. The memory of the past was strong upon him,—alas, when was it ever weak? But to-night it was stronger than usual.

Kingsbury church! How the very name of the place brought back the memory of that first Sunday; the very atmosphere with its balmy warmth and rustic quiet; the fair young face looking up at him in that homeward walk by the fragrant hedgerows; the utter peacefulness in his own heart, which had not yet gone astray! Yet was not that guiltless Sabbath afternoon the commencement of his undoing? Kingsbury church! Would to God he had married her there, and so escaped the horror of knowing himself her murderer, and so won her for the joy and comfort of his days!

‘I would not have let her die,’ he said to himself. ‘I would have made her life so bright and happy. What a sweet flower it was, lying in my hand, and I flung it away! Yet, O God, how could I dream that I should kill her? How could I tell that she was of so much finer a clay than other women?’

Mrs. Harcross came back from the Bungalow directly after the wedding, much pleased with her entertainment. There was a little dinner in Mastodon-crescent that evening,—a small and careful banquet made for two or three legal luminaries whom it suited Mr. Harcross to gratify by such trivial amenities. Weston was there, in his capacity of cousin and tame cat, and to Weston and her husband

Mrs. Harcross gave an animated account of the interesting ceremony, in the back drawing-room after dinner, while the legal luminaries were disputing over their tea-cups in the front, and Mr. Harcross in his office of host, was for the moment off duty.

'Georgina looked lovely,' she said. 'There was the usual string of bridesmaids, but the only pretty one among them was Sir Fran Clevedon's sister. You ought to know her, Weston; such a nice girl, and a capital match, no doubt.'

'Pray do not cherish any benevolent intentions on my behalf, that line, Augusta,' replied Mr. Weston Vallory, with his supercilious air. 'I am not in the market.'

'What a misfortune for Miss Clevedon!' said Mr. Harcross. 'Then the wedding was a success, Augusta?'

This was the first opportunity husband and wife had had conversation since Augusta's arrival from the railway station, just time to dress for dinner.

'Everything was charming, Hubert. That Kingsbury church the dearest place in the world; such a perfect bit of rustic architecture, set in such a delicious landscape. You were not half enthusiastic enough about it in your letter; but, then, you never were enthusiastic.'

'What, you know the neighbourhood?' asked Weston, with an inquisitive look.

'Yes. It was near Kingsbury that Hubert found the funny old farmhouse where he recruited his health three years ago,' replied Augusta. 'I referred to one of your letters, Hubert, and discovered the name of the place,' she went on to her husband. 'It is called Brierwood. I made the kind old Colonel drive me to see it yesterday afternoon. Such a sleepy old place, and with quite an uninhabited air. I suppose the people have emigrated, as you said.'

'Did you inquire?' asked Mr. Harcross, with a splendid indifference: the bar had made him an accomplished actor.

'No. There was no time. We had to get to your roman Brierwood by all manner of cross roads, and we were afraid of being late for dinner, at least the Colonel evidently was; and didn't like to press the point, though I had quite a fancy for seeing the inside of the old house where you stayed so long. How could you possibly endure such dulness for all those weeks?'

'I wanted rest, you see, Augusta; and it was an advantage to be remote from society.'

'And then there may have been some accidental relief to the dulness,' said Weston, with his favourite 'snigger'; 'a rustic flirtation, perhaps. A man does generally get up some kind of flirtation in that sort of place. It is a natural product of the soil.'

Mrs. Harcross gave him a withering look, but Mr. Harcross vouchsafed no notice.

'I am glad things went off pleasantly,' he said to his wife, with a glance at the group in the next room, holding himself ready to spring upon them the moment conversation flagged.

'I never saw a sweeter wedding, so rustic; the church was decorated with flowers, all white and pink. I think I never saw so many azaleas, not even at St. Sulpice's on Whit Sunday.'

'Where do they go for their honeymoon?' inquired Weston languidly.

'To Switzerland. Georgie has travelled so little, and Sir Francis is to show her everything she is most anxious to see. But they are to be at Clevedon early in August, and I have made a promise for you, Hubert.'

'Indeed, you should never promise anything except for a god-child. What pledge have you taken on my behalf?'

'I have promised that we will spend the last two weeks in August with the Clevedons. Now there's no use in shrugging your shoulders like that, Hubert. The session will be over, no committee-rooms, no law-courts. You can have no possible excuse for objecting.'

'Only that I detest staying in other people's houses.'

'Why?' asked Mrs. Harcross, looking fixedly at him with her cold hazel eyes. 'Do you feel so much out of your element among county people?'

It was a little involuntary burst of that slow fire which had smouldered in her heart of late. She was vexed with herself the moment after she had spoken.

'Well, no; I am not the kind of person to torment myself with an idea of my own inferiority, even to county people: and I certainly should not consider myself the inferior of Sir Francis Clevedon.'

'The Clevedons seem to think themselves very great people, at least Sibyl told me a good deal about their ancestors when she was showing me the family portraits.'

'Did she favour you with a sketch of her father's character?' asked Mr. Harcross coldly.

'No; the father appears to have been hardly a nice person. Neither Francis nor his sister talk much of him. Now mind, Hubert, I have set my heart on this visit, and I do hope you will not oppose me.'

'I think I rarely oppose you in any reasonable desire. But it's hardly worth while laying out our campaign for the end of August at the beginning of June. I must go and talk to old Shepeskinn. Won't you sing, Augusta?'

'In order that those horrid lawyers may talk all the louder. I'll play, if you like. Will you get me a volume of Mendelssohn out of the stand, Weston?—the blue morocco volume.'

Weston found the volume, and stood by his cousin as she

played, turning the leaves correctly to a crotchet, and talking to him in the pauses of the music. He asked a good many questions about Kingsbury, and the old farmhouse in which Hubert had stopped and seemed singularly interested in this episode in the life of Mr. Harcross. But he contrived to put his questions in the airy manner, and Augusta's only idea upon the subject was a conviction of her cousin's frivolity.

'I shouldn't wonder if there were something mysterious in the farmhouse business,' Weston Vallory said to himself, as he smoked a midnight cigar during his homeward journey to the Surrey hills. Harcross looked rather glum when I mildly suggested a possible flirtation in that quarter. Did ever any man on the right side of forty live six weeks at a farmhouse without a stronger motive than the desire for fresh air and new-laid eggs? And I remember how uncommonly close my friend was on the subject of this rustic excursion when I met him in Acropolis-square, the day after his return. I am inclined to think there is something; and if there is, look out for squalls, Mr. Harcross. I've had a trifle too much of your *dé haut en bas* manner, to say nothing of your having swindled me out of the woman I meant to marry, and I should vastly like to drop down upon you unexpectedly some fine morning.'

Christian meditations to carry through the soft summer night, but they were hardly unpleasant to the soul of Weston Vallory: they did not gnaw or rend his vitals with a vulture-like rending, but agreeably titillated his senses, and gave a zest to his contemplation of the future. He felt so sure that, sooner or later, he should be able to drop down upon his fortunate rival.

'That little account has been a long time standing, my friend Harcross,' he said to himself, 'but I mean to square it.'

## CHAPTER XXVII.

'MORE FELL THAN ANGUISH, HUNGER, OR THE SEA.'

CHANGES at Brierwood. The land was let off to a sturdy red-face farmer sprung from the peasant class, who lived with his numerous progeny in a roomy cottage remote from the old homestead; a substantial tenement, which had been built for the occupation of a bailiff in the days when the Brierwood people were gentry. The house and garden remained, cared for by Mrs. Bush, the charwoman, and her husband who was of the gardening persuasion. No item of the old furniture had been removed, but the rooms were for the most part tenantless. For the last twelve months Richard Redmayne had been across the seas at Bulrush Meads, where James and Hannah's industry had created quite a model domain. He had been to see how they thrived, but the prosperity of his estate gave him little gladness. She who was

to have been the glory of his home could never look upon those fertile valleys, could never wander by his side across those breezy hills. The brightness and the beauty of his life had vanished; he lived on, ate, drank, slept even, very much as he had done before, and did not always dream of her. But O, how often—how often in his slumbers the pale sweet face smiled at him, he heard her voice, felt the touch of the clinging hand, and told himself that it had all been a delusion, a false alarm—she was not dead. And then came the waking and the dreary reality. She was gone!

'God's curse light on her murderer,' he said to himself, 'as my hate and vengeance shall follow him to the end!'

Time had not dulled the edge of his hatred. Of the man who had tempted Grace away from her home he never thought but one thought. That man had slain her—killed her as surely, and with as deep a villany, as if he had planned and executed a deliberate murder.

'He would have slain her soul,' he told himself. 'There was no earthly friend to save her. God sent his angel Death to snatch her from him. But that man would have killed her soul. Is he less guilty of her death because he did not mean to kill her body? And when his fancy had tired of her, would he have cared in what river she hid her dishonour?'

James tried his hardest to detain his brother on that side of the world.

'You've no call to go back, Rick, old fellow,' he said. 'You've let the land to a good tenant. Why shouldn't you stop with us for the rest of your days, and take your own place as owner of the property? The climate suits you. There's plenty for you to look after here, a good horse for you to ride, and good friends to keep you company within a day's easy journey. What have you got to do in England?'

'To find the man who murdered my daughter.'

'Poor Gracey! Well, it was the next thing to a murder,' said James, who had shed not a few quiet tears over his niece's fate, brushing a rough hand across his eyes many a time when Grace's image rose before him as he walked alone in the sunshine. He had children of his own, and loved them heartily, but not as he had loved Gracey. She seemed so different from them—like a moss-rose in a cabbage-garden.

'It was a cruel thing to tempt her away, Rick; but, you see, we don't know. He may have meant better than we think. He may have meant fairly by her; there's no knowing.'

'Don't talk like a fool, Jim. Does a man ever mean honestly who acts as that man acted? Mean fairly by her? Why, he lied about her when she was dead, as he had lied to her when she was alive; perjured himself, and called her his sister, because he

knew himself to be a villain, and hadn't the manhood to speak the truth, even when she was dead, even when she lay dead under his roof. Thank God, she died! It is hard to lose her; yet I thank God, she died! And O, Jim, if you know me at all, you know that I would barter all the rest of my life against one year with her.'

'Stay with us, Rick; stay, and be master here, where it's all your own.'

'No, Jim. I'll get a lawyer to draw up a deed of gift, and make you a present of this place. I may come back some day, when my business is done, and end my days in peace among you. I never know peace at Brierwood any more. But I'm bound to come back there for a little while. I've something to do.'

'Come, Rick, be reasonable. What's the good of hunting for a needle in a bottle of hay? You'll never find that man; and if you did find him, what then?'

'I'll settle that when I've found him. That's enough, Jim. I'm bound to sail in the Lucy Ashton next Thursday week.'

He sailed in that teak-built clipper, made the homeward voyage once more prosperously, and came to Brierwood one bright July afternoon, when Kingsbury joy-bells were ringing as if they had gone mad.

'What's all that row about?' he inquired of Mrs. Bush, the housekeeper, as he walked in at the open kitchen-door with the air of having come home from a day's outing. He had crossed the fields, and come in by the garden. There was no pleasure in such a coming home—no expectation. His fields were in the possession of others; his house was kept only in memory of the dead, as the church would have kept a tomb.

'Lor, Mr. Redmayne!' cried Mrs. Bush, letting fall a lump of dough which she was in the act of taking from the oven; 'what a turn! what did give me, to be sure!'

'I told you I should come back some day.'

'Yes, to be sure; and we've looked for you many a time, but I never expectin' to see you so suddint, without so much as a line to say you was comin', and your bed not aired nor nothink. But we'll soon get things straight. There's a beefsteak in the larder, as I ordered for my Sam to-morrow, and I can cook a bit of dinner for you, and you'll have everythink comfortable. And I hope you've kept your health, sir, while you've been in foreign parts.'

'I've been tolerably well, the climate yonder suits me. What are those confounded joy-bells ringing for?'

'Don't you like 'em, Mr. Redmayne? I think they're cheerful when they ring like that. I don't much care for them on summer's evening rung slow, they make me feel solid. Don't you know about the wedding? It's a great day for Kingsbury, and



there's a dinner at Clevedon—my good man's gone there. Sir Francis Clevedon was married at Kingsbury church this morning.'

'O, Sir Francis is come home, is he?' said Richard listlessly, looking round the familiar room, with its heavily-timbered ceiling, and lattice windows looking out on a spacious stone yard, and tumble-down low-roofed outhouses, a pump, an empty dog-kennel, and half a dozen fowls scratching on a shrunken manure-heap. How well he remembered Grace flitting in and out of the old stone-flagged kitchen, pretending to help a little in the household work, sitting down by a sunny window to shell a great basket of peas, and running off before they were half done, and forgetting to come back!

'Sure to goodness, Mr. Redmayne, didn't you know about Sir Francis?' exclaimed Mrs. Bush, who evidently supposed that English newspapers would have made it their business to supply the colonies with the latest news of Clevedon Hall.

'How should I know?'

'Dearey me! He's been back going on for a year. Let me see, it was last August as he come, and you not to know anythink! He was married this morning to as sweet a young woman as you ever see—Colonel Davenant's daughter of the Wells. I went over to see the wedding, but it was as much as I could do to get inside the church-door. I don't suppose as Kingsbury church was ever so full since it was built.'

Richard Redmayne seemed quite indifferent to Sir Francis Clevedon and his affairs. He left the kitchen, and roamed through the old house, unlocking the doors of the rooms, which had been kept carefully locked in his absence, and going into one after another, only to stand for a little while looking round him, with a slow half-wondering gaze, as if he could hardly believe he had ever lived there. The rooms were all faultlessly clean, but had a damp chilly atmosphere, and a certain dreariness of aspect, as if they had been thus shut and thus disused for the last fifty years. If Richard Redmayne had been a believer in ghosts, he might almost have expected to see one in those dusky chambers, where the half-opened shutters let in the afternoon light grudgingly, leaving obscure corners where a ghost might lurk. But for Rick Redmayne there was only one shadow, and that was with him always.

He had lived and been happy in those rooms once upon a time. His thoughts went back to the days of his early manhood, before his wife's death, to pleasant peaceful days, when his worst care had been a doubtful harvest or sickness among his cattle, and from that time they went to the summer afternoon on which his young wife left him smoking his pipe in the garden, left him with a light heart and a loving smile, a little look back at him which he remembered to this hour, and thus left him for ever.

Bitter memories! Can any life into which death has once

entered ever again be perfectly happy? Rick Redmayne had lived the sharpness of his grief, but not the grief itself. Ten years after that day of horror, with his fair young daughter by his side, loving her with all the force of his strong heart, the recollection that loss was as fresh in his mind as it had been in the first weeks of bereavement. And now that Grace was gone, he forgot the tranquil years that had intervened between those two great sorrows. It seemed to him rather as if an angry Deity with one sweep of his hand had left him desolate, robbed him of all hope and comfort.

If he had any virtue, it was that of Job. He did not curse God and die. He lived: but he lived to cherish a purpose which perhaps was worse than the suicide's desperate sin. He lived on in the hope that fate would give his child's false lover into his hands—a vain blind hope at the best, but strong enough to keep him alive.

Sorely had he changed since that day when, dashed a little by misfortune, but still daring and hopeful, he had asked the indulgence of his creditors before he sailed across the world to redeem his fortunes. In mind and body the man was alike altered: nowhere where he had been social—doubtful and suspicious where he had been open and trusting as a child—brooding alone over his injuries, angry with the very world for having held such a traitor, rebellious against his God for having permitted such a wrong. In his outward aspect even the change was striking. It was not so much that his dark brown hair was streaked with iron-gray, that there were deep lines upon his face than his actual years would have warranted upon the hands of a rugged face. The change of expression was a greater change than this. The face had hardened, the eyes and mouth had grown cruel. At its best now the expression was at once gloomy and reckless. At its best the face of Richard Redmayne was the face of a man to be feared.

He came back to his old home, but not to his old habits, or to his old friends. The friends had fallen away from him long ago, chilled and repelled by a change so obvious. Of the details of that sorrow which had changed him, the outer world, his small world, knew very little. People in Kingsbury knew that Grace Redmayne had gone away from home, and had died away from home, but when and where she had died had been told to none. This very silence was in itself mysterious, and to the minds of most people implied disgrace, some sad and shameful story which the girl's kindred kept hid in their own hearts.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

'BUT O, THE HEAVY CHANGE NOW THOU ART GONE!'

RICHARD REDMAYNE sat in the old rooms, and paced the old garden, or lay smoking his pipe on the grass under the cedar day after day, and made no attempt to occupy himself, physically or mentally, but let the days drag themselves out how they would. They were very slow to pass, yet so empty, that when gone they seemed to have travelled swiftly, like the days in a workhouse or a jail, where there is no greater event to mark the passage of time than the monotonously recurring hours for meals. He shrank from being seen in his old haunts, and from being greeted by his old companions. If he had himself committed some unpardonable crime against society, he could hardly have avoided his fellow-men more persistently than he now avoided all the friends of his youth and manhood. He rarely went beyond his own garden and orchard in the daytime; but at night sometimes, when the rover's restlessness was strong upon him, he would set out long after dark, walk fifteen miles, or so, across country, in a reckless mood which took no heed of distance or direction, and come back to Brierwood in the dewy dawn, worn out and haggard.

'I try to walk the devil down, you see, Mrs. Bush,' he said to his housekeeper, on returning from one of these rambles, a speech which filled the honest woman with consternation.

'There's something unked about Richard Redmayne,' she told her husband. 'I don't think he's ever been quite right in his head, poor soul, since he lost his daughter.'

He was in England, and he had come back to find his child's destroyer, yet he did so little. He went up to Mr. Smoothey's office, made an appointment with Mr. Rendel, the private inquirer, and offered that gentleman any terms he chose to demand if he would only find the man who had called himself 'Walgry' on one occasion, and 'Walsh' on another.

He pressed the business with such a feverish eagerness, that Mr. Rendel, who did not by any means see his way to making the required discovery, affected a kind of hopefulness for very charity.

'It is rather a difficult matter,' he said. 'You see, I have positively no clue. The man takes a furnished house at Highgate, gives it up, pays every one in cash, no cheques or anything of that kind, and vanishes. I have no photograph of the man, no knowledge of his profession, antecedents, anything; and yet you ask me to pick him out from the entire population of this city, supposing him to be an inhabitant of this city, which we are by no means sure he is.'

Richard Redmayne sat with his back to the dusty window of the dusty office, listening to these arguments with a gloomy countenance.

‘Never mind the difficulty,’ he said abruptly; ‘it’s your trade get over that. If it was easy to find him, I should have found long ago. Find him, Mr. Rendel, and I’ll pay you what you for your difficulty.’

‘But, my good Redmayne,’ said Mr. Smoothey, in his comfortable family-solicitor-like way, ‘supposing the man found, what then? You have no redress. The law which makes abduction a crime would not tell here, since your daughter was nineteen years of age. Nor can you prove that any wrong was done her, or that any wrong was intended. To what end, then, would you trace the offender?’

‘Never mind what end. Find him for me, that’s all I ask to do. I may have my own manner of reckoning with him. I want to see him face to face. I want to be able to say, “You killed my daughter.”’

‘Upon my honour, Mr. Redmayne, I think you look at this business from a very false and fatal point of view. Granted that a great wrong was done in tempting your poor child to leave her home; remember that it is a kind of wrong committed almost every day, a kind of temptation to which every good-looking young woman of middle class is more or less subject. The fatal result was not a part of the wrong, not contemplated by the wrong-doer. Had your daughter lived, who knows that this gentleman might not have married her? Even if it were not his immediate intention to do so, he might have done so ultimately, prompted by conscience and affection.’

‘Don’t try to humbug me by that see-saw kind of argument if he didn’t and if he did,’ cried Rick Redmayne roughly. ‘I know that he stole my daughter away from her home, and that she died of the shame he brought upon her, and that I hold him murderer.’

There was no use in talking to such a man. The words of wisdom were wasted on this passionate undisciplined soul. Smoothey shut his spectacle-case with rather an impatient snap.

‘You must do as you please, Mr. Redmayne,’ he said. ‘I have no doubt Rendel will do his best with your business, and of course any legal advice you may want from me is at your service; but I really cannot see your motive.’

‘That man’s in a bad way,’ said the astute Rendel, when the farmer had left the office. ‘The sort of man who would scare me surprise me if he did something desperate. I sha’n’t help him find the seducer. In the first place, I consider the thing beyond the limits of possibility; and in the second place, even if I could find the man, it would go against my conscience to have any hand in bringing those two together. Yet you know, Smoothey, that conscience is rather elastic.’

‘Toughish, certainly,’ answered the lawyer; ‘and warrants stretch. However, I quite agree with you about this poor fellow.’

Redmayne. The man has brooded on this subject until it has become a monomania.'

Richard Redmayne went back to Brierwood soon after this interview, believing that he had done his uttermost, but not till he had been to look at the cottage where his daughter died, and the grave in which she lay. The pretty little gothic bandbox on Highgate Hill was let. He could only prowl up and down by the railings for a little, screened by the laurel hedge, listening to the fresh voices of children in the tiny garden. There were guelder roses in bloom, and a bed of standard roses in the centre of the miniature lawn, bird-cages in the open window, the whole aspect of the place bright and joyous. He looked up at the window of that room where they had laid her in the last solemn slumber, looked at it, and thought of the day when she had lain there, a dull November day, with the rain beating against the window-panes, perhaps, and all nature gloomy. It wounded him to see the house under this cloudless June sky, to hear happy voices from the room where she had died broken-hearted.

He walked all the way to Hetheridge—seven miles along the dusty north road; then away westward, by a quiet cross-road, to the quietest village within twenty miles of London. He passed the village green, and the pond where the ducks were floating lazily in the sunshine, and went on beneath the shelter of chestnut and lime to the churchyard where Grace was buried. This sixth of June was her birthday, and he had chosen this day of all others for his pilgrimage to her grave.

'I might have brought some flowers or something,' he said to himself as he opened the low wooden gate. 'What a hard-hearted wretch I must be not to have thought of it! Did I ever go to see her empty-handed when she was at school?'

The churchyard was not a particularly pretty one, only very solemn and tranquil, with a great yew-tree making a wide circle of shadow above the quiet green hillocks. There were no splendid monuments of modern date, but here and there a ponderous tomb within a rusty railing, a mouldering stone sarcophagus, with sinuous ivy creeping in and out among the cracks in the stone, and a dank moss thick upon the time-worn inscriptions. The charm of the scene was its utter tranquillity. A village churchyard on a hill, with a wide stretch of landscape below it, and only the faintest indication of a city in the far distance.

Richard Redmayne found his way to the gravestone. Was not every detail of the quiet scene burnt in upon his brain? The churchyard was empty of all human kind, yet on the granite slab there lay a wreath of waxen-petalled exotics, all purest white, and as fresh as if it had been that minute laid there.

Rick Redmayne went back to the gate, striding over the low

graves recklessly. Who was there to bring votive wreaths to the grave—who, in all her little world—except the man who had destroyed her?

‘He has been here,’ the farmer said to himself; ‘is here still perhaps, loitering somewhere. O God, if I could only meet him, this place, by her grave! It seems the fittest spot for us two come face to face; and if we do meet here, I think I shall strangle him.’

The muscular hand closed with a tighter grip upon the oak staff which Mr. Redmayne carried as a walking-stick.

He planted himself by the churchyard-gate and waited, listening for a footstep on the gravel-path.

‘I wonder that he can have the heart to stand beside her grave knowing that he killed her.’

He was not softened in any degree by this indication that his lost child was still held in loving remembrance. His only sentiment was wonder that her destroyer could presume to lay his wreath upon her grave—that he dared approach the scene which must needs remind him of his crime.

He waited an hour with a dogged patience, but no one came. Then he made a careful round of the churchyard, and meeting no one, knelt down and said a short prayer by his daughter’s tombstone; not such a prayer as Christianity inspires—reverent, submissive, confiding; but tinged rather with that fiery spirit which might have breathed in the supplications of some outraged father of the old Greek days, when men’s gods were of the sternest mould—an appeal to the Eumenides—a blind wild cry for retribution.

He took the wreath in his strong hand when that prayer was ended—took it, intending to scatter those frail blossoms to the summer winds. The delicate petals seemed almost to shrink and shiver in his rough grasp; but after looking at it for a few moments with a moody countenance, he laid it gently on the stone where it had lain when he found it, encircling his daughter’s name.

‘She was so fond of flowers, and these white sweet-scented ones above all,’ he said to himself. ‘No; I won’t spoil it, even though he put it there.’

He rose at last and left the churchyard, meaning to make inquiries in the village as to the appearance of any stranger who might have been observed by the innkeeper or his gossips. In so small and primitive a place a stranger could hardly escape observation, but at the gate Richard Redmayne encountered the sexton, who had espied him from his cottage a few paces off, and had come out to see whether there might not be a sixpence to be earned in this direction.

‘Would you like to see the church, sir?’ he inquired.

‘No; I don’t care about churches. Have you been about here all the morning?’



‘Yes, sir ; in and out, on and off.’

‘There’s been a man here ; a man who brought some flowers to lay upon one of the graves.’

‘Like enough, sir. There’s many as brings flowers ; that’s the beauty of this place ; nobody ever interferes with ’em ; the children never lays a finger on ’em.’

‘You haven’t seen any stranger, then, this morning ?’

‘Well, yes ; there was a gentleman I met, coming out of this here gate, like as I might meet you now this minute, above an hour ago ?’

‘You didn’t know him ?’

‘Not to call to mind his name ; but I know his face well enough. He’s got somebody buried with us, I make no doubt.’

‘Does he come here often ?’

‘Not as I know of. I took the liberty to wish him good-morning ; but he only made answer by a nod, and walked off before I could ask him if he’d like to see the church.’

‘Look here,’ said Richard Redmayne, with his hand in his pocket. ‘Here’s half-a-crown for you. Tell me what the man was like, as close as you can, and I’ll make it five shillings.’

He tossed the coin to the sexton, whose shrivelled old countenance wrinkled into a rapturous grin.

‘Lor a-mussy, sir, I wish I were a better hand at that sort o’ work. The gentleman were tall and dark, with his eyebrows marked very strong, like, givin’ him rather a fierce look. His face looked to me as if it were made of wrought iron ; but he was a personable sort of a man for all that, and quite the gentleman.’

‘That will do,’ said Richard Redmayne, throwing him a second half-crown. ‘If ever that man comes this way again, you get some one to follow him, and if you find out where he goes, and where he lives, I’ll give you a five-pound note. Remember that.’

‘Lor, sir, it’s a thing as I never did in all my born days,’ cried the sexton, gazing at Rick Redmayne with an awe-stricken countenance ; ‘you bain’t one of these here perlice orcifers in plain clothes, be ye ?’

‘Never mind what I am ; you do what I tell you, and earn a five-pound note. You can telegraph to me at this address when you find out what I want to know, and you shall have your money by return of post.’

Rick Redmayne wrote his address on a page of his pocket-book and tore out the leaf, which he handed to the sexton.

‘I am as willing as any one in Hetheridge to earn a honest penny, sir ; but follerin’ any one do seem so out o’ the way and under’and-like. Certingly, there’s my grandson Thomas, as sharp a lad as ever any one need wish to see, and as fleet-footed, he might foller any gentleman afoot or a-horseback, and I don’t believe as he’d

be left behind ; and a rare artful lad too, and an uncommon favourite with our parson ! Lor, how he do give out the responses in *the* psalms ; you might a'most hear him out here—that sharp and shrill !'

'Find out where this man lives, and earn your money,' said Mr. Redmayne. 'Don't lose that bit of paper with the address. Good-day.'

He walked away rapidly, leaving the sexton pondering, and scratching his head with a puzzled air.

'As to artfulness,' he muttered to himself with an inward chuckle ; 'if it comes to that, our Thomas might get his livin' by follerin' ; but I don't know what parson would say to it. Howsumdever, there's no call for him to know.'

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C. A. Murray, del.

W. A. C. Engraver

BETRAYED.

## BETRAYED

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She hid within the tropic gloom  
Of palmy verdure art had wrought,  
And listen'd hopeless to her doom,  
And found the truth, the truth unsought.

Another sat upon her throne,  
A phantom queen was in her place,  
Within the heart she held her own,  
A rival met her face to face.

The lurid light was in her eyes,  
A deadly pallor on her cheek ;  
Hot to her lips the words would rise,  
Fierce words which yet she could not speak :

'Bend, bend above her till she learns  
The hidden secret of your eyes,  
And stricken with the horror turns,  
Scared at the guilt that in them lies.

Pour vows into her dainty ear,  
Vows poison-sweet no bee would sip,  
Until her brow with passion sear,  
And crimson as her crimson lip.

Grasp with the hand no longer mine,  
The fairer palm that but to hold  
Quickens thy blood like summer wine,—  
Fear not if love be over-bold !

Spare not the arts you did not spare  
To win a heart already won ;  
Eager as fowler with the snare,  
Leave not the prey till all be done.

For her—may she your vows believe,  
And with her life her love entwine,  
Then learn you live but to deceive,  
And die ! So vengeance shall be mine !'

Thus, where the palmy verdure made  
A hiding-place of tropic gloom,  
She breathed of him who had betray'd,  
And her whose beauty was her doom.

WILLIAM SAWYER.

# IMAGINARY LONDON

A delusive Directory

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

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## VI. GREAT MAHOGANY-STREET, W.C.

I HAPPENED the other day—it was Tuesday the 27th of February 1872, I think—to be in St. Paul's Cathedral, E.C. (I will give it a real and not an imaginary name for once in the way), on a matter of public business, a business indeed in which some twelve thousand people besides myself, including some very grand folks indeed, were likewise concerned. The business comprised, and was brought to a termination by, a short sermon from the Archbishop of Canterbury; and so, while his Grace was in the pulpit perorating, I improved the occasion to make my way out of the cathedral, having, I may hint, some other private business to transact in a newspaper-office in the middle of Brain-street, and foreseeing, as I did, that there would be a tremendous crush at Floodgate when good Dr. Tait had dismissed the enormous congregation in the cathedral. I am a candid soul, and may as well own that I had besides a little private business of my own on hand, and of a very pressing nature; for I had been abroad and at work since seven o'clock that February morning, and as I was anxious to obtain some trifling refreshment—say the quarter of a pork-pie and a bottle of vichy water, my usual luncheon on occasions of national moment (when the Prince of Wales was married I took sarsaparilla and a trotter)—before I went into harness again, to work, so it seemed to me, until my hair grew through my hat and my nails through the toes of my boots. Talk of the galleys at Toulon! talk of the treadmill! Try a Thanksgiving-day; strive to write about it; and then tell me how you like it.

I reached St. Paul's-churchyard in safety, and was preparing to descend Floodgate-hill in peace, when I became aware of a most portentous thing, over which a guard of honour of the Scots Fusileers and a strong detachment of the City police were keeping watch and ward. Colonel Fraser, commissioner of the last-named force, rode up, in full uniform and a beautiful cocked-hat, to where the portent stood, and looked at it curiously. I fancy that the gallant colonel was rather puzzled to know what to make of it. At all events, he ordered me to stand back, and then rode away on his handsome horse hurriedly. I don't think I should mind being a commissioner of police, if they would let me wear a smart uniform and a cocked-hat on gala-days, and order people about. How I would worry my super-



attendants and inspectors, to be sure ! I don't think Colonel Fraser, who looks a good-natured kind of man, worries anybody unnecessarily ; but then his temper has not been exacerbated by a long years' course of staring at shows and pageants through a double opera-glass, and then writing reams of verbiage about them afterwards against time and the promptings of your viscera—*les tiraillements de l'estomac*, as the French nervously say—and the dictates of your own reason, which tells you answerably that all you have to say would be very appropriately dismissed in a brief paragraph. Not talk, but excessive written and afterwards printed words are the chief curse of this age. Talk passes away like froth. Manuscript and letterpress remain like dregs. Before you can hope to be good and happy, Engenius (Eugenius is a little boy who has grown big, and whom I am trying to dissuade from the adoption of journalism as a profession), you must abjure the rough magic of word-spinning and burn your newspapers.

But as to this portent. It was a coach, and one of the most remarkable coaches perhaps extant in this country. Did you ever see Mr. Frith's capital picture of Claude Duval, the ladies' highwayman, exacting a ransom from a fair dame he had captured by causing her to dance a coranto with him ? There is a coach in the painting I mean ; and it is something like the vehicle I saw last February in the churchyard. There should likewise be by some Scottish artist, whose name I forget, a picture of the murder of Archbishop Sharpe by John Balfour of Burley and his fanatical fellows. What has brought the fierce old Cameronian to my mind at this particular conjuncture, I wonder ? Well, I happened to have seen among the grand folks assembled in St. Paul's a certain North-British peer, bearing the title of Balfour of Burley. The coach from which the assassins (for conscience' sake) dragged the unlucky prelate was of the same model with that I now beheld ; and my mind flying off at a not unreasonable tangent to the first chapter of *Old Mortality*, I remembered the wonderful coach in which the lord lieutenant of the county and his family, with the chaplain in the boot, and the footmen armed to the teeth with cutlasses and blunderbusses hanging down behind, patronised that Wappenshaw at which Guse Gibbie made so deplorable an exhibition of himself, and brought such woful discredit on the knightly house of Tillietudlum.

The coach at St. Paul's was, in good sooth, a most venerable ark ; a pentagonal cube in shape, and weighing, I am sure I don't know how many tons. I have no memory for statistics ; and does it so much matter how many tons or hundredweights or pounds anything weighs, any more than it concerns us to be told that fifty thousand testotalers at a Crystal Palace fête consumed fifty thousand pork-pies, seventy-five thousand plum-buns, and a hundred and fifty thousand cups of tea ? If I am killed in a battle, what does it matter to me

if the instrument of my death be a cannon-ball as big as a plum-pudding, or a conical bullet no larger than a lady's thimble or a revolver? Do I care to know how many millions of hairs I got in my head? No; I only trouble myself to inquire whether I am growing bald or not, and whether Mrs. S. A. Allen's hair-storer will arrest the progress of my calvity. The pores of your face might be reckoned, I suppose, by millions. What odds, so long as you keep your hide unflayed by the hangman's whip? Figures are not facts; although this slate-scribbling, column-casting, retracting, fraction-mongering epoch assumes in his superficial science that because two and two *seem* to make four, they are really a quadruple multiple of one. They are nothing whatever of the kind. One is a mystery. You are ONE.

A common-councilman close to me, with a chimney-pot hideously topping the blue mazarine gown with catskin trim with which his pudgy frame was enwrapped, remarked to a friend in a chocolate-coloured gabardine, that 'he heerd the pannils of the carriage-ridge was painted by Moriller.' I have never heard that Don Juan Murillo ever devoted himself to coach-painting, although, I suppose, he was, like his compeer Don Diego Velasquez, a favourite at court. There is no knowing how far his loyal deference to the commands of the King of Spain and the Indies might have led him. Didn't the painter Leimuller paint the soles of Louis XIV.'s shoes with delicate miniatures representing the victories of the Grand Monarque? At the jubilee of 1809 did not Mr. T. Stothard, R.A., paint the illuminations at night a transparency which was hung over the entrance to the apartments of the Royal Academy at Somerset House and which represented the twelve moral virtues bearing King George III. in top-boots and a pigtail in their midst, and contemplating the comfortable spectacle of the devil flying away with Bonaparte? I doubt, nevertheless, whether in any case 'Moriller' came to England to exercise his possible ability to paint coach-panels.

Tremendous black horses, of apparently enormous strength, were trapped with harness covered with tags and bobs and gilt plates and harnessed to the huge conveyance. The burgher in the morning gown told his gown-fellow that the horses had been lent for the occasion by Messrs. Pickford of railway-van celebrity; but he in the evening seemed to lean somewhat to the conclusion that a selection had been made in this instance from the stud of Messrs. Barclay and Perkins. But while they were jabbering their commonplaces, my faculties began to ramble. The ark, I learnt from an intelligent inspector of police, was the state carriage of the Speaker of the House of Commons. It had brought, with a single life-guardsmen to attend it, the Right Honourable Mr. Brand from Westminster to St. James's that morning, and was in waiting to take him back again, with a footman-train-bearer and the official in charge of the silver-gilt poker.

so contemptuously disparaged by Cromwell, to the floridly-gothic cloisters in a back yard, where a grateful country delights to lodge the first commoner in England. But when, I ask myself, did I last see that carriage? The Speaker on ordinary occasions was not surely in the habit of patronising a kind of Derby Dilly which would hold six inside, and required a team of dray horses to drag it along. Mrs. Speaker surely could never go shopping in that ponderous old caravan. No, no; it would be Mrs. S.'s brougham that stopped the way in Regent-street by Lewis and Allenby's corner; while Mr. S. might not be too proud, when he paid a private visit to the City, to hail the nearest hansom from the stand in New Palace-yard. Yet it was not so very many years ago that not only kings and queens and lord mayors and chancellors and speakers rode abroad in carriages hung like this one on cumbrous old leathern traces, heavy with carving, glistening with gilding, glowing with allegorical paintings; with a hammer-cloth as huge as a punch's-show for the coachman to sit upon, and sculptured angels for the lackeys to hold on by behind, and lions' heads in high relief grimacing from the axle-boxes. My thoughts by this time were wandering hopelessly; and the Right Honourable Mr. Brand and his official carriage, the common-councilman and the cit in chocolate, with St. Paul's and the national thanksgiving, and all the other troublesome realities, faded away into the sea of unity, and landed me at last on the innumerably-pebbled shore of Imaginary London. I was, in imagination, in a region as strange as that in which Alice the Inimitable found herself when she floated through the looking-glass in that wonderful phantasmagoria which has been the delight of so many thousands of grown-up children; although how far the children who are not grown up appreciate the humours of the Hatter and the March Hare, the Red King and the White Rabbit, the Jabberwork and the Bandisnatch, is to me extremely questionable. Children are strong Tories in regard to fairy lore; and Lewis Carroll's thick-coming fancies are, I am afraid, sadly subversive of the orthodox belief in Jack the Giant-killer and Sindbad the Sailor.

But what saw I in my imaginary wonderland? Mainly, all manner of coaches, all like unto that antiquated shandrydan I gazed upon that Tuesday in the gray shadow of St. Paul's, and, stranger to tell, the major part of them issued from Great Mahogany-street, E.C., and the adjoining Gamboge-acre. Then the coaches travelled eastward to Bishopsgate and Fenchurch-street, thick-sown, at the period to which my imagination strayed, with the mansions of the nobility and gentry. Others rolled westward, but no farther to the occident than Hanover- or Cavendish-square; for there was no Regent's-park, there was no Behemoth-gate, there were no Sardapalus-gardens in my imaginary region. A section of the coaches travelled north to Soho-square, and even to Russell and Blooms-

bury; for beyond, far behind the British Museum, there were open fields. I saw the coaches of my dreams, the coaches whose counterfeited presentments I had so often studied in old histories of London. Stay, there were more of those unsubstantial vehicles flitting south, into St. James's-square, and Piccadilly, and Pall-mall; but none passed beyond the Stable-yard. Belgravia and South Kensington existed not in the Imaginary London of the past. What people saw I in and about these coaches? Wonderful people, *à la* *fili*—beaux and belles who seemed to have come out of the pictures of Hogarth and Sir Joshua; gentlemen in Ramilies wigs, brocaded coats, flapped waistcoats, ruffles, Steinkirck cravats, sky-blue satin breeches, and gold-laced hats; exquisites with clouded canes and red heels to their shoes; guardsmen in snowy white gaiters and long pigtails; chaplains in puffy cassocks and sleeves; bishops in wigs like birds'-nests; ladies in paint and patches—I have seen some ladies not wholly imaginary so accoutred—in sacques and hoops, in corsets of the shape of wineglasses broken short off at the stem, with fans, and furbelows, and gloves which reached up to the elbow. African youths, with silver collars round their necks and snowy turbans with peacocks' plumes on their woollen heads, sat by John Coachman's side on the boxes of these carriages, showing their white teeth and grinning so that you might have fancied they were ambitious to bite their ears off. These were the retainers of the nobility and gentry, who handed round the chocolate to the company, and oftentimes got a whipping for breaking my lady's last auction-bought china monster, when, in truth, it was the monkey or my lady's pug dogs. There were plenty of pugs airing their smirched nozzles at the windows of my imaginary coaches; and I have always fancied that the breed of pugs had its origin in an inquisitive dog attached to the premises of Messrs. Day and Martin, and who went about smelling the blacking-bottles prior to their being corked and papered and tied, as we have been told in a certain famous biography is the fashion in boot-polishing circles.

I saw coaches and pair, coaches and four, and not unfrequently coaches and six. Nay, I think an imaginary mentor pointed out to me a coach and eight—all Flanders mares, with their manes and tails tied up with amber-coloured ribbons—in which the Venetian Envoy was making his solemn entry into London. He had landed at Harwich, and come into town by Shoreditch, where the mob, after stoning him for a Jew and (on more accurate information to his theological opinions being conveyed to them) cursing him as a Papist, had made a playful onslaught on the wagons following in his wake, with the intent of plundering his baggage. My imaginary coaches were not all double-bodied, or capable of holding the chaplain in one protruding boot, and the governess of my lady's children in the other. There were chariots very high hung indeed, and pri-

mitive phaetons and curricles on springs yet more elevated, and the like of which you may see to this day in the streets of Quebec in Canada, where their view always recalled to my mind the delightful sketch of the innyard and the *désobligeante* in the *Sentimental Journey*. I noticed that the high-hung chariots were mainly painted a very bright gamboge colour, and that within them sat portly gentlemen with cauliflower wigs of exorbitant dimensions, and generally carrying golden-headed canes, frequently sucking the auriferous knobs with an owl-like air of gravity and sapience. These sages affected black horses to their chariots, and their coachmen and lackeys were harmoniously clad in the deepest sables. My imaginary mentor told me that the portly gentlemen with the gold-headed canes were physicians in large practice. 'Yonder,' he said, 'is Dr. Mead. He is going to Queensberry House, to wait upon the duchess, who is but poor-ly. The "vapours," it is said, are her grace's ailment; but the doctor knows as well as I do that there is nothing more the matter with her this morning than a headache brought on by sitting up too late last night playing spadille, manille, and basto, and by drinking a great deal too much ratafia and curaçoa after supper.' It was not uncommon for grand folks in the time that never was to exceed in the matter of strong waters. In the actual time and in real London, a lady would faint if you offered her a glass of sherry, and go into hysterics at the bare mention of soda-and-brandy.

Then mentor pointed out to me the famous Dr. Arbuthnot; a bustling gentleman, with a look of great good-humour and (so I fancied) kind-heartedness in his rosy face. He had completed his round of visits that morning, mentor whispered, beginning with his royal highness the prince (who was in the sulks with his papa and mamma) at Savile-house, Leicester-square, and ending with Mr. Congreve, the famous playwright and fine gentleman, who had been attacked by a smart twinge of gout. The doctor had pocketed ever so many guineas from his aristocratic or would-be aristocratic patients, and was now bound to the coffee-house in Bow-street, to pass a jolly afternoon with Mr. Pope, Mr. Gay, Dr. Swift, Count Algarotti—that ingenious Italian and adept in the Newtonic philosophy—and half-a-dozen lords who liked to mingle with the wits now and then, and of Templars who were still fonder of looking on the wits and the lords. But before he unbent himself to the genial dissipation of a bowl of punch and a pipe of tobacco, the doctor would go over to another coffee-house in Bow-street, much frequented by apothecaries, who would give the great physician rapid descriptions of the maladies of patients whom they were attending, and who could not afford to send for the renowned Dr. Arbuthnot. For the treatment of these cases the doctor was good enough to write out prescriptions, charging for each only a half-guinea fee.



By and by, mingling with the coaches and chariots, came jolting by a great host of sedan-chairs, in shape for all the world like the Speaker's state coach, only taken off the wheels and with their bodies cut asunder, and in these hand-litters beaux and belles, quite as grand as those who sat in the carriages, were conveyed through the fashionable thoroughfares of the Imaginary Town. There were public as well as private sedans, and in Aceldama-fields, and Vanity-square, and Piccadilly, and the Mall, there were ranks of hackney sedans drawn up in line, just like cab-stands. The chairmen were usually Irishmen. Some of them I saw lying asleep at the base of the palings surrounding the garden in Aceldama-fields. Others were playing pitch-and-toss or shove-halfpenny at the posts, and squabbling by times fiercely. Some would be drinking in the gin-cellars and mug-houses; and ever and anon there would be a broil, in which the Pope, the Pretender, and a vast quantity of foul words were sure to be mixed up, and which ended in a fight. I was in the very thick of one of these imaginary battles-royal: one gigantic representative of the Green Isle and the vested interests of hackney chairmen was laying about him with a long pole shod with iron; his mate had got the head of a hunchbacked tailor in chancery, and was banging away at it with his fist as though it were some primitive instrument of music from which he wished to extract rough harmonies; it was raining black eyes and hailing ensanguined noses; a mob had gathered round the fighting chairmen, and—the *odium theologicum* was easily excited in those imaginary days—the fervent Protestantism of several gentlemen without shirts had already led them to moot the propriety of sacking the neighbouring Popish chapel in Mouldy-row; the landlord of the nearest tavern—the Two Jolly Chairmen—perceiving a strong inclination on the part of his customers to partake of beer without paying for it, and subsequently to heave the pewter measures at each other's heads, talked of sending for the foot-guards; and an unhappy washerwoman, who had been robbed in Little Turnstile by an outlying gang of thieves from Whetstone-park, was shrieking with appalling shrillness for the constable and the headborough:—the *mêlée* was at its hottest, the fighting at its fiercest, when I found myself in Great Mahogany-street, W.C.—that spacious thoroughfare leading from Gamboge-acre into Aceldama-fields. But the awakening was delusive. It was but a dream within a dream; for the London in which I seemed to awake had no more of reality in it than the fantastic region in which mentor had shown me the lumbering panorama of carved and gilded coaches, and of beaux and belles who, rest their souls! are all as dead as the good Queen Anne in whose reign they flourished. 'Flourish' is, I believe, the proper word; although how one is to flourish in a wicker-work hoop and on high-heeled shoes, puzzles me to determine. But all celebrated people have flourished at some time or another. Daniel Lambert



urished, as the Claimant is flourishing now, with nine-and-twenty  
me of flesh to flourish upon. The Irish giant flourished, and so  
d the Polish dwarf; and all the saints in the calendar flourished  
ceedingly. How would you have liked to behold the flourishing  
St. Gregory the Great?

There are still plenty of coachmakers in Great Mahogany-street  
and Gamboge-acre; indeed, with the exception of Western Oxford-  
street, there seem to be scarcely any carriage factories in (Imaginary)  
London proper, save those in the neighbourhood of Aceldama-fields,  
and the great Inn of Court from which the Fields take their name.  
Carved and gilded equipages as splendid, nay more gorgeous, but  
not so heavy and clumsy in construction, are still made likewise in  
Great Mahogany-street, as the coachmakers' ledgers can testify full  
well. England, the competition of America, Paris, and Vienna not-  
withstanding, still makes the handsomest and most durable carriages  
in the world. You can have a delightful trotting wagon or a rock-  
away made in New York or Philadelphia; the Champs Elysées turned  
out before the war some very sweet things in the way of coupés, vic-  
torias, and chars-à-banc; and a few of the Viennese coachmakers  
continue, by the exhibition of their work in the Prater of the Kaiser-  
stadt, to prove that they have not forgotten the traditions of excel-  
lence transmitted to them by the carriage-factors of Hungary, in  
which country, according to the legends, and in the reign of Mathias  
Corrinus, the very first coaches properly so called were made. But  
for a shapely, comely, substantial coach, brougham, phaeton, barouche,  
or four-in-hand, you must still go to Great Mahogany-street or to  
Gamboge-acre. Why should those two thoroughfares be the head-  
quarters, and well-nigh the exclusive ones, of the coach-building  
trade? For a very sufficing and for a very simple reason. A hun-  
dred and fifty years ago Great Mahogany-street not only stood mid-  
way between the court and the city end of the town, between the  
regions inhabited by patrician and by commercial wealth; but it  
was itself the centre of a highly aristocratic, fashionable, and wealthy  
district. There were gentlemen's houses in Covent-garden. Many  
wealthy merchants lived over their warehouses in Holborn and the  
Strand; Soho-square was not far off, and Soho was full of the town  
houses of the nobility; and in Great Mahogany-street, and the conti-  
guous Aceldama-fields, there were scores of grand mansions inhabited  
by dukes, and earls, and noble lords with blue ribbons; by judges,  
and bishops, and baronets, and South-Sea directors. Decadence,  
from a social point of view, has long since seized on the neighbour-  
hood. Who would live in a house close to the slums of Clare-market,  
close to foul and felonious Drury-lane? The grand mansions in the  
Fields are divided into flats, and let out as chambers to barristers,  
solicitors, attorneys, notaries public, perpetual commissioners for tak-  
ing the oaths of married women, and other respectable but unpleasant

tenants; and irrevocable dinginess has seized upon the buildings which surround that which is still the most beautiful intramural garden in the British metropolis. So it is likewise with the whilom grand houses in Great Mahogany-street, which still, however, keeps up some amount of architectural prestige in the stately edifice of the Rosicrucian Tavern; while in the adjoining more stately structure of the Rosicrucian Hall the Brethren of the Rosy Cross, the Illuminati, the Kabala, the Brotherhood of the Lone Star, the Confraternity of the Black Eye, and other mysterious guilds continue to celebrate their mysterious rites; and subsequently adjourning from labour to refreshment, feast with awful solemnity in the convivial caverns of the Rosicrucian Tavern. But many of the once sumptuous houses in Great Mahogany-street have become printing-offices, or stationers' warehouses, or are let out as tenement houses to the squalidest and most poverty-stricken of lodgers. It is one of the oddest streets, socially considered, in all Imaginary London; for while a portion of it, and no inconsiderable one, is inhabited by seemingly very indigent persons, and while the streets and courts on either side of it are reeking slums, there must be among the carriage-builders and the furniture-dealers—for Great Mahogany-street abounds with upholsterers, not necessarily dealing in second-hand chattels—a very large amount of wealth.

I suppose that, unless the sky takes some of these days to raining roast larks, or there comes a week with three Thursdays in it or my ship comes home, or my maternal grandmother in Honolulu relents, and leaves me her extensive property of bread-fruit tree and coral reefs, that I shall never have a coach of my own—I mean a proper coach, with well-groomed horses, squabs, and cushions, and rugs, and all that kind of thing, a coachman in top-boots, and in coat-of-arms (I can buy one for thirty shillings, or invent one for myself, which is cheaper). I did, it is true, once own a half share in a carriage-and-pair during the last Austro-Italian campaign in the Tyrol. It was a peculiar carriage. I never knew it to have been washed, and one of the wheels was always coming off. Our equipage came to grief very soon. One of the horses, I think, was shot, and the other fell lame. The coachman—a gentleman from Bergamo who had been in the image-carrying and afterwards in the macaroni-making trade—ran away with the harness, and with a dressing-bag of mine to boot; and I think one day that I was taken into custody by the carabinieri on suspicion of having stolen my own carriage. We sold it at last for about a fifth of what we had given for it; and if somebody hadn't bought it, I should have been inclined to tilt the ramshackle old thing over a precipice, for it had brought us nothing but discomfiture and woe. And once in England I was very nearly buying a real four-in-hand drag—not so very much dilapidated either—at Aldridge's, one Saturday, for the surprisingly low sum of four

teen pounds ; but I happened to have only fifteen pounds two shillings and sixpence in the world at that moment, so I wisely thought better of the matter, and resisted an impulse which, for the moment, was well-nigh uncontrollable. I should have liked to own a real four-in-hand, for the look of the thing ; nay, perhaps it might have done me indirectly a great deal of good, and I should have begun to work with unflagging industry in order to raise the funds for the purchase of a team of 'spanking tits.' Why should they be called 'tits,' and why should they 'spank' ?

No, I shall not ride in my own carriage, I ween, on this side the day when Mr. Shillibeer's black coach, or its equivalent in the pauper's shell, borne by two gentlemen from the workhouse, calls for me. I prefer riding in a hansom to buying a brougham ; yet I have still a strange hankering for Great Mahogany-street, for peering into its large carriage-builders' shops, and comparing the fashion and embellishments of the equipages with those in Gamboge-acre. I like the smell of the varnish ; I admire the glowing blazonry of the herald-painting : the fringe and hammercloth-makers' shops ; the windows of those who plate harness and make carriage-lamps ; nay, the coloured diagrams put forth by the carriage-draughtsmen, have all an indefinable charm for me. I am fond of speculating on the numerous bell-handles which bristle on the door-jambs of the Great Mahogany-street houses, and speculating on the kind of artisans—all connected, I make sure, with the coach-building trade—who have their habitations above. There is no harm, I suppose, in thus lingering over the contemplation of luxuries which you can never hope to possess. There need not be a greedy envy in so looking at them. One can look without longing ; and perchance not all the children who stare in at the pastrycooks and pudding shops are hungry, any more than all the ladies who peep into the bonnet-shops in Regent-street are burning to have new head-gear bought for them. If we look at the sky or the sun admiringly, we are not such fools as to imagine that they can, under any circumstances, be ours. And were we to attain the unattainable, possession perhaps would not give us felicity. I have known several very miserable people who had very splendid carriages of their own.

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## MY UNCLE IN MANCHESTER

BY FREDERICK TALBOT, AUTHOR OF 'THE WINNING HAZARD,' ETC.

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IN the *Belgravia Annual* for 1872, I told the reader of my first unfortunate start in life, and what a mess I made of my first commission. You don't remember me? Aæth is my name, pronounced Yacht, if you please. If you don't care to look back to the story, you need only take for granted that my outset *was* unfortunate, and resulted in my being thrown once more upon the world. But something becomes of people, under the most unfavourable circumstances even; necessarily, also, something eventually became of me. A family council was held to consider what should be done with me. It was attended by all my uncles and aunts except one, that one being uncle John, who lived in Manchester; and of course it was unanimously agreed, that he, the absent one, was the very and only man who was able to do anything for me. He had written a letter, indeed, saying that if his nephew was a smart active young man who was willing to turn his hand to anything, and make himself generally useful, there was no harm in his knocking about in a warehouse, but that it was no use sending any kid-gloved young chaps up there.

'Arthur never *does* wear kid gloves,' said my sister; 'always dogskins, don't you, dear boy?'

'O, if that's all,' I said, 'I'll wear white berlin, if it will please the old fellow. I don't think that need stand in the way.'

The end of it was, that I went off to Manchester, by parliamentary train too, in an access of economy, which stopped at all the stations, and took the whole day on the journey. It wasn't bad at all, the first part of the way. Plenty of smoking, and drinking out of square bottles, and chaff, among fat farmers and their wives, and nice plump young women, and jolly rustic sort of people. But when we came near Manchester, and to a place called Stockport, we trundled across a viaduct right over the top of all the tallest factory chimneys, and looked down into a great chasm filled with smoke,—in fact, if you can imagine the crater of Vesuvius lined with eight-story buildings, and all the smoke from the subterranean fires coming out of long pipes stuck on the top of these buildings, you'll have a very good idea of Stockport, as seen from the railway bridge,—well, when we'd rolled over this viaduct, as I say, we seemed to have tapped quite a fresh barrel of humanity. Crowds of people trooped in the carriages—there had been a great dog race in the neighbourhood

and I heard a good deal of the triumphs of one Fan, a bitch—who seemed of altogether a different race from the population I'd left behind. They were not, however, without characteristics homogeneous to the rest of their countrymen. They swore a good deal, outraged decency in their language, were very much tipsy for the most part; they seemed, too, to value dogs more for their powers of speed than other qualities; but they differed specifically in their feet. They divided the hoof; wore clogs with two iron-bound ridges in lieu of soles, which ground your toes most cruelly if you had the misfortune to get in the way of them. I don't know that they were much rougher than south-country roughs; but they had far more *verve* and vigour and originality about them, and seemed to form more the staple of the population.

My heart sank a good deal as we fairly got under the pall of smoke that hovered over the whole country, and I felt as if I were leaving hope and daylight behind me; but when we'd fairly landed in Manchester, I didn't find things so bad. I'd been put up to a few wrinkles about Manchester by young Snugbotham, who ground with me for the army, and I knew from him that the Queen's Hotel was the best place to go to, and very comfortable I was there.

I had thought that perhaps uncle John would have sent to meet me at the station. I knew he kept a carriage, and I looked out all along the curb of the arrival platform to see if I could make out a carriage with the Aæth crest; but there were no carriages waiting for the parliamentary train, so I took a cab and drove off to the Queen's.

Next morning I went to look for uncle John. I found myself, first of all, in a place they called Piccadilly, but how unlike the real thing! On my left was an open space with some insignificant-looking statues on it, and some basins with iron pipes round them that might have squirted water once. Flanking this open space was a neat barrack-looking building: that was the 'infirmary' or hospital, and from this infirmary, as a sort of nexus, several streets branched off. Big omnibuses, with horses three abreast, came leisurely along, crowded outside and in exclusively with males, all on business bent. Right before me was Market-street—a grimy shabby street—and at the corner, where Market-street debouched upon the open space, was an inn—the Mosely Arms, I think—where many of the buses pulled up. This Mosely Arms to my right-divining soul gave the idea that Mosely-street—which was the street I was told to ask for—could not be far off, and I found that I was correct. It was one of the streets which diverged from the infirmary. It was a long irregular street of warehouses, old and new, tall and short, blocked up one end by a 'classic' church, and I reached this church without seeing my uncle's name on any of the doors. I remembered then that I had a letter in my pocket



which contained his address. Just think what my feelings were when I found the place and saw over the door a large signboard—  
'Death & Co.—Fustians.'

Some of our family indeed have assumed the D', and it was not impossible that uncle John might have been among these, and that the apostrophe had been rubbed out; but no, the thing was too plain, in large gilt capital Roman letters—DEATH.

This may seem a small thing; but when you've been in the habit of priding yourself on your name, that your forefathers have borne for centuries, to see it brought down to the common level of Death is too annoying. They'd call me Death, too, if I didn't stand out against it; and I'd always been so particular about the way the name was spelt and pronounced. This must be seen to at once. As I stood looking up at the signboard, I found that somebody else was watching me from the steps of the warehouse; somebody who had descended from an old-fashioned four-wheeled chaise, drawn by a rat-tailed old screw—an old man, with a cold pinched-up face, who wore a short mackintosh coat, of the ancient strong-smelling sort, black trousers rather short for him, and brown gaiters over his shoes.

'Servant, sir!' he said politely, as I made to address him.

'Is Mr. John Aaeth' (pronounced Yacht, as I said before) 'here?'

'John Death? Ay, ay. John Death, at your service. What's your business?'

'Ah, uncle,' I said, 'I'm your nephew Arthur. How d'ye do?'

The old gentleman took a yellow bandanna from his pocket, and trumpeted loudly into it.

'Ugh!' he said. 'What do you want?'

'Well, I—I—understood you expected me.'

'Ah,' he grunted, after a while, 'I did expect a lad for the warehouse, son of brother Ned. Great fool Ned, full of his fineries and fancies; what came of 'em, eh? Why, nobbut *you*, I expect, and chaps like you. Ugh! Well, come in.'

This wasn't promising, but I had heard that he was something of an original and must be humoured, so I followed him quietly into the warehouse. He dealt in fustians, you'll remember. Fusty was they were. The smell? Well, the smell was like—what was it like?—say the essence of skilled labourer, on a hot day after a shower.

The counting-house was a dark little place boxed off from a great long room full of these fustians. There were in it two tall stools and a cane-bottomed chair. On the desk were three or four big books with laced patterns on their backs.

'Well,' he said, after a while, and after he'd looked me over once or twice, and scratched his head after each inspection—'well, where are ye lodging now?'

'O, I haven't got lodgings yet. I stopped at the Queen's last night.'



The old fellow looked me over in silence once more, and then he really seemed to have got a funny idea. He chuckled, in a choky way, put his head out of the counting-house—'Joash!' he called—'Joash!'

A broad red-faced man, with tremendous brawny arms, in his shirt sleeves, wearing a bright figured satin waistcoat, appeared.

'Joash,' said my uncle, 'this is new lad for warehouse. He's stopping at the Queen's!'

Both Joash and he seemed to find the idea very funny. I couldn't see the joke, but I tried to humour him a bit, and joined the laugh.

My uncle turned serious all of a sudden. 'Joash,' he said, 'lad's no good to us.'

'Eh, I dunno, maister,' said Joash cheerfully. 'Lad's reet enough; he's your nevwew, maister, and he's loike to hold his head up high. Eh, he'd make a fine traveller, maister, if he knew aught about guds.'

'Guds!' cried uncle—he meant goods, fustians, &c.—'he knows naught!'

'O, come,' said I, 'I do know a bit about travelling; I did travel once, on commission.'

'And what sort of a job did you make of it?'

I told 'em the story, whereat Joash exploded, and retired to hide his emotions behind a heap of fustians. My uncle looked grimmer than ever, but still there was a twinkle in his eye that almost belied his gravity.

'Well,' he said at last, 'I mun see if Joash can make aught of thee. Here, Joash,' he cried, 'take the lad and set him to work. I shall put thee in the wage book for thrutty shilling a week. But thou'lt never earn it. And look here, lad,' he said: 'none of thy jokes here; we're all for business here. I've heard of thee before, my lad, and first time I catches thee at any of thy wild pranks, away thou goest back to thy friends again—dost hear?'

'If ever I so much as wink, except out of business hours, you may boil me!' I cried. And I meant it; I really meant to go into fustians with all the vigour of my intellect. I meant to master the business, and put myself into the way of taking my uncle's place.

But the worst of it was, there was nothing to do. 'It were very slack,' Joash said, 'just now, being nearly Christmas time and no orders coming in.' Uncle contrived to make himself busy, trotting about, going on 'Change and to the Portico—a place where lots of old fogies congregate to read the papers and gossip—blessed old Athenians!—but in the warehouse we had literally nothing to do from morning till night. And of course, under these circumstances, Satan crept in. I was bound to do something, and so I got into mischief. Our amusements, however, were innocent enough. Mak-

ing egg-flip, heating it over the gas-jet on the top floor, was a great resource. I had a specialty for making good flip, and Joash was passionately fond of it. Then we played whist, and I initiated my companions into the latest scientific manœuvres of that noble game; for I was then an excellent player. I was a skilful caricaturist too, and drew poor Joash so beautifully to the life, that the poor old fellow was quite cut up.

‘Nay,’ he said, ‘if I’m ugly as yon, it’s quite time I were put under ground.’

He secreted the sketch after a while, but kept it carefully, nevertheless, and I have more than once caught him looking at it in quiet corners, shaking his head, and singing the song of Simeon over it.

In the course of our experiments in the heating properties of gas, I made a remarkable discovery. I found out that by applying the mouth—somebody else’s mouth is preferable—to the orifice of a gas-burner, and blowing down it vigorously, in a few seconds you extinguish all the lights that may be supplied with gas from that particular set of pipes. This was an endless source of amusement. Imagine that it is Saturday morning, a heavy fog abroad, dark as pitch outside, inside the gas burning foggily. Uncle is in the counting-house, reading the *Manchester Courier* by gaslight. Joash is downstairs in the same floor, banging about fustians from one pile to another, by way of looking as if he’d something to do. Presently the lights go out one after the other, and the whole building is left in Cimmerian darkness.

‘Joash! Joash!’ my uncle would shout, struggling out of his office. ‘Joash! there’s that domned gas again. Run, Joash, and turn out all the taps.’ Poor Joash would come puffing and blowing upstairs, turning out all the taps as he came, anathematising the gas company at every step. After that the gas-men would be sent for, and would poke about the pipes and meter for hours, but never found anything wrong.

‘It’s t’wetter got into pipes,’ Joash would say. And once or twice they had up the pavement of Mosely-street, and traffic suspended for hours, but they could never find the source of the evil.

Uncle had a traveller who was generally out on his rounds, but was now at home for Christmas. He was an ill-conditioned fellow, a great swell in his way, and always wore a wonderfully shiny hat. He had a grudge against me, fearing, I suppose, lest I should cut him out of my uncle’s good graces, for he had some idea of getting a partnership by and by, and was always fawning on uncle John. He would come sneaking about, joining our little diversions, and sharing our flip, without sharing the score; and then, as I heard afterwards, he’d go and tell my uncle that I was debauching the other hands, and teaching them to drink and gamble. I couldn’t think

at the time why my uncle looked so surly, but I didn't seem to grow in his good graces.

This traveller, whose name was Slocomb, was spiteful enough in other ways too. One day I had left my hat on a pile of fustians, and my friend the traveller, who had picked up a customer in the town, and was showing him some goods, thought proper to drop a heavy piece right on the top of my unfortunate tile, crushing it quite flat. He pretended that it was an accident, but behind my back he gloated over the deed, and laughed loudly to his pals; and I determined to pay him off. It was a serious trouble to me, that smashed hat; for I couldn't afford a new one, and was fast verging to the needy in other respects as well.

Now for revenge! Night was coming on; my uncle was out, as I thought; Slocomb was on the basement-floor writing, and Joash was sweeping out the rooms. He used a composition of sawdust and water, something like very thick oatmeal porridge, and sprinkled the floors with this before he went over them with his brush. Now there was a hoist from the basement of the warehouse to the top story, a wooden pipe, as it were, about four feet square, with openings on each floor; a rope and cage ran up and down it. This wooden pipe also was used as a means of verbal communication from one floor to another, as by shouting down it you could make anybody hear from the bottom to the top of the warehouse, and *vice versa*. I had made one of the young hands, a lad whom Slocomb tyrannised over, my accomplice, and he commenced operations by shouting down the hoist:

'Hi! Slocomb!'

'Well!' said somebody, coming and putting his head into the hoist.

'Here's a letter for you; a young woman left it; catch!'

Slocomb I knew would be eager enough; for he was always engaged in some dirty intrigue, and made this lad fetch and carry for him, and indeed he stepped at once into the inside of the pipe to catch the letter.

I was ready on the first-floor with an immense box full of the sawdust-and-water composition, which Joash had swept up from the floors, with all the dirt and mud of the day mixed up in it, and I had arranged it so as to tip over at a touch. Down it went like an avalanche. There was a sound of crashing and smashing, a cry of rage and astonishment. I ran downstairs as hard as I could go, to gloat over my victim and proclaim my deed; for I really wanted a row with the fellow. His discomfiture was complete. He lay there in a pool of sawdust and water, his hat smashed over his face, his head and shoulders covered with the composition, whilst streams of water trickled all about him. 'One for me, old fellow!' I cried, and seized him by the legs to draw him out. Horror of horrors! my

hands came in contact with my uncle's gaiters! He it was having heard that Slocomb was carrying on an irregular correspondence by means of his apprentice, had been watching for him and had stepped into the hoist to intercept the letter. This afterwards, for at the time, when I saw from under the bath protrude the indignant outraged countenance of my uncle, I

Rub-a-dub-a-dub-dub! A great crash of drums and squeal of the ear-piercing fifes. I ran to the door. A recruiting party was passing down the street, amid a crowd of loafers. Away without looking back, and next morning I was attested as a private in the 66th Light Dragoons.

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## NEW COMEDY AND OLD

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father of the 'sensation' drama was not Mr. Dion Boucicault, but one Mr. Vincent Crummles, who, it will be recollected, had a play should be written specially to introduce some properties which he had by him. This notion of a real washing-tubs being thus distinguished, was considered a rare one on the shifts and devices of country managers, but not needed that it was to symbolise a very degenerate period of the drama. The pump and tubs were laughed at, but were gazed with awe and admiration as the real hansom crossed the stage, and as the firemen came rushing in with steam engines to extinguish the devouring flames of sailing-steamboats, railway carriages in motion, and even 'Capitaine Corcoran's wreck apparatus for saving life,' were all only piracies of a country manager's idea. The notion, however, was not to exercise much influence. By and by the sated public received the newest prodigies with only a languid stare; and managers with consternation, some perhaps with relief, made every effort that the ruinous competition of wood and canvas with the objects of out-door life had ended in the suppression of its interest. The play had become a sort of show or diorama without the interest of the diorama, which exhibits to us what we have never seen; whereas the sensation play gives what we can see in the street every day. The reign of the 'pump' development lasted a surprisingly short time, or six years; and we look back with something like the childish enthusiasm, the grave criticism, with which we condemn those cheap and meagre triumphs of the carpenter's or the painter's skill. It is not so much the well-abused burlesque or apotheosis of wood and canvas that has hopelessly vulgarised the stage.

Managers, finding that they could no longer charm with this false power, despised their patrons, cast about in a sort of desperation for some other spell with which to conjure. They had at a little theatre in Tottenham-court-road had long been overflowing with audiences, and enjoyed the highest prestige and success, that its actors and pieces were welcomed with an unusually warm and highly favourable criticism. Farther, they observed that the results were secured with a slender staff, and an outlay as slender. They instantly came to the conclusion that the pattern thus favoured was the profitable taste

that must now be catered for. A curious reaction followed; no language was strong enough to reprobate the fashion that had been just dismissed, and the prodigies of mechanical skill which had recently evoked the tumultuous applause of thousands were contrasted with the pure and intellectual entertainment derived from the spectacle of a pair of lovers in a garden, and the piquancy of epigrammatic dialogue. At every leading theatre this line was diligently followed. New authors sprang up, faithfully copying the method and devices of the successful writer, who was gratefully complimented in the critiques as the 'founder of modern comedy.' Instead of such materialistic, down-right titles as the *Streets of London*, *After Dark*, *Behind the Scenes*, and the like, the boards now exhibited such delicate conceits as the *Two Roses*, *Apple Blossoms*, *Caste*, *School*; whole rooms on the stage were richly furnished by eminent upholsterers, whose names were actually given in the bills, while leading tailors and West-end milliners of reputation supplied suits of the best cut and materials. Actors observed the manners and deportment of men of fashion, studied the bearing of 'swells' at the Park and other places; while the supposed etiquette of genteel society was emphasised at theatrical evening parties and silvan picnics. The public received this new histrionic change with favour, complacently accepting compliments on its refined and intellectual taste; while the critics reproached those who scarcely considered the present fashion a reform with their ridiculous jeremiads over the decay of the stage. The late Mr. Robertson, Mr. Albert, Mr. Byron, and Mr. Gilbert have been the favoured and most successful ministers to this new taste.

Yet, at the present moment, strange to say, there are precisely the same symptoms of failure visible as were noticed when the play of sensation had begun to lose *their* hold on the town. New comedies and 'comedy dramas' are announced and produced, only to fail outright, or to enjoy the sort of success which a manager owes it to his self-respect to secure—a decent 'run' purchased at a heavy sacrifice. The favourite authors are found wanting. A few more fiascos, and the 'Robertsonian comedy' will be abandoned. Even in the lifetime of that clever writer his hold on the public was found to be weakening; and, indeed, it was fairly admitted by his admirers that one of his attractions was owing to excellent management, and to the finished acting of a well-trained company. This short season of success terminated, managers are now beginning to find that the melodrama, somewhat elevated and refined, will be their next card to play; while the skilful Mr. Boucicault is about to develop the old-pattern burlesque into the gaudy spectacles of the *Gaiety*, and is about to dazzle us with gorgeous and refined extravaganzas. Thus we seem destined to travel round a vicious circle of reaction, much as our French neighbours do in respect of the



governments. The reign of material objects on the stage produces a reaction in favour of words and conceits. These husks, causing disgust, produce a reaction in favour of pure story. This again causes a return to the old principle of spectacular delight. There are symptoms, however, of encouragement for yet another department—that of pure *character*; and the genuine and hearty favour with which the French dramas, and some of our own old comedies, have been welcomed, show that the public may by and by make a naive discovery that, after all, plays written upon the old recognised dramatic principle—necessary in the composition of a true play—may furnish the highest entertainment.

It will be asked, then, what is the cause of this failure of the Robertsonian drama, which is refined, intellectual, and, as we are told, a ‘mirrored reflection’ of our own daily life? The cause is simply the same as that of the failure of the class of drama that preceded it—misapprehension of what should be the character of a play. Strange as it may seem, both failed from an excess of what has been called realism. That definition of Hamlet’s, ‘holding the mirror up to nature,’ has led astray both the realists and idealists of the stage; while the writers who write comedies for the sake of introducing evening parties, picnics, the manners of ‘swells’ and heavy dragoons, &c., might be surprised to learn that they are following the same vicious principles as those who drag cabs and fire-engines across the stage. Both are ‘shows,’ and both aim at something that is outside true dramatic art. They mimic still life in both instances. The Robertsonian-comedy writers copy the manner, fashion of speech, catch-words, deportment of particular types of the day, as well as the conventional scenes—croquet, tea-parties, walking in the garden, picnics; but this belongs, like the cabs and conflagrations, to the department of *exhibition*. Character and story (more character than story, for character itself supplies story), these are the true elements of what is dramatic, and these absent, all the most laboriously-copied pictures of dress, manners, and bearing will avail nothing for the interest of a true play. It may be worth summarising in this place a few points that may explain, what few persons probably reflect on, the absorbing interest felt at a grand stage play. This must be traced originally to the interest felt in human character in daily life, which, when natural and free in its action, has always a never-flagging interest for the average looker-on. Its movements have a freshness and piquancy that become a perpetual surprise. Where there is anything forced or affected this attraction passes away, the movements lose their spontaneity, we seem to know beforehand what will take place. Character, in short, is inexhaustible in its interest, for according to the circumstances and new combinations presented to it, it exhibits itself in new and unexpected attitudes. On the other hand, peculiarities of

manner and speech, the conventional forms of dress and society, are wholly uninteresting. This might be illustrated from another art, Music, which is popular from some trick of novel phrase or colour, and which has only its dress or manner to recommend it, disappears when the dress or manner has gone out of fashion; but music of *character*, like that of Beethoven or Mozart, endures, in spite of its old-fashioned dress and phrases. Again, granting the general interest to be found in character, there are certain opportunities and occasions which favour the development of character. We might be months in association with a particular character before the fitting occasion might arise which should call it forth. Hence, as in all other arts, there must be a certain abstraction and eclecticism, if we would exhibit character at its best; and the writer who would transfer character to the stage must, from study or instinct, have discovered first under what conditions and collisions character is best developed; and secondly, how to bring together within the span of a play the most effective of these phenomena. All this, it will be seen, is independent of dress, personal manner, catch-words, tea-party picnics, so-called 'epigrams,' and pretty conceits, which make the stock-in-trade of the new comedy of our day.

That this mere insisting on the customs and manners of daily life is false dramatic art will be seen from another reflection. Such 'notes' convey nothing distinct; and in real life, a person who wished to form his judgment on such marks and tokens would have nothing to guide him in these meagre data. The study or reproduction of mere materials is always wholly unprofitable. A photograph, though the exactest copy of the human face, is outside art; an artist of genius comes, and his painting is a triumph of art. He proceeds on exactly the same principle as the true dramatist,—not copying form, flesh, and colour with servility, but performing the intellectual operation of studying expression and character; and after observing and comparing various manifestations of expression, he *abstracts* from these a sort of general type, which is the secret of what is called 'a fine likeness,' and is the spell with which Titian and Moroni worked. Modern portrait-painters have neither genius nor time for so complex an operation, and the results produced are quite analogous to those of our vaunted modern comedy.

It is imagined that situations should be tame and tranquil, reflecting the average current of daily life. On the contrary, a drama should present some episode which, though rare, is not exceptional. The really powerful and interesting crises of life are either fortuitous, or arrive with an irresistible force as if directed by the old 'Anangke' or Fate of the Greek tragedy. They cannot be arranged to order. Hence the lives of the average community pass by without this excitement, or at least without perceiving the full power and meaning of such situations. Romances and plays are

required to supply this want; and the genius of the romance-writer and playwright is shown in the judicious selection and treatment of this 'extract,' as it were, of life, which shall be remarkable and interesting, and yet seem to be within the experience of those who read and listen.

Tried by this test, our fashionable modern comedy completely fails. It is simply a nice copy of outside peculiarities, with no pretence of studying or exhibiting character. Great attention is bestowed on what is called 'the epigrammatic dialogue,' and on what have been styled 'idyllic scenes.' The epigrams are due to a sad lack of propriety, for they have no relation to the speaker or the situation; it is in truth the author speaking in his own person. The late Mr. Robertson introduced this pernicious fashion, loading his scenes with forced and flippant repartees, conceits which provoked a ready laugh, and thus tempted him and his successors into more extravagant flights. The framework of the best of his pieces was taken from the French and German, and a natural admiration for the business and wit of French dialogue led to imitation. But he forgot that the wit of French dialogue is engendered directly by the situation; with the English writers the situation would be cheerfully sacrificed to the wit. This foreign element lent an unnatural air to the scenes; which, after the public had begun to tire, made the whole appear false and unnatural. A formula of love-making was introduced, which it was the fashion to call 'idyllic;' long interviews between enamoured pairs in gardens, conducted in a languid and hopeless strain, and which did not represent the English manly and straightforward way of arranging such matters. A gold-fish pond would be introduced, which would supply epigrams and conceits, the lovers laboriously expounding piscatorial metaphors in reference to their situation. Elaborate allusions to the moon, to flowers, sun-dials, birds, and such pastoral elements, are used to work out the progress of their passion. But the gravest dramatic shortcomings are revealed in the treatment of a situation, when anything like one does occur, or when a trait of character ought to reveal itself. As in *Caste*, when the Marquise is called on to exhibit her extravagant family pride to the audience, the device is adopted of making her read a whole page of Froissart's Chronicle aloud, to the weariness of the audience. When the marriage of her son with a low-born girl is revealed to her, she sits calmly with her eye-glass up, asking, as each disreputable member presents himself, 'Who is that?' and 'Who is that, pray?' This shows not merely a feebleness of grasp, but an unconsciousness of opportunity and ignorance of the dramatist's craft. It might be urged that this tranquil mode of treatment is but a faithful reflection of the impassive habit of the day. But such phases are improper for dramatic treatment, which, as we have seen, should, like a good painter, select

only what may be called the representative elements of nature, in the dull average economy of ordinary life.

It is easy, however, to point out shortcomings, and it may seem ungracious to condemn what was certainly a movement in the direction of wholesome reform, if not reform itself. It will be assumed, perhaps, that the next suggestion for improvement will be the exhumation of the 'fine old comedies,' with all their old-fashioned modes and peculiarities. This dreary and scholastic remedy is hardly to be recommended. The truth is, the public is entitled to work coming from the hands of its own generation; and the real value of these 'fine old comedies' is to be found in their being useful classical models. A diligent study of these would discover principles by which character, humour, and situation should be placed before an audience, and in this view is their occasional revival to be encouraged. The visible enjoyment of the audience at the performance of pieces like the *Heir at Law*, or of Mr. Boucicault's *London Assurance*, the heartiness of the laughter, the 'gusto' and relish with which the humour of a situation is welcomed, contrasts caustically with the forced titter that greets the thin verbal quips sprinkled over our modern pieces. This alone might warn our writers that they had not struck the wells of dramatic enjoyment. Two more opposite systems could not be well imagined than those upon which the professors of these schools have worked. The best of the old comedies were constructed upon these principles: a bold broad plot was chosen, which required five acts for its development, an extent which had positive advantages, giving opportunity for slow and essential development, and allowing the audience opportunity for a familiarity with the characters, which cannot be acquired within three acts. A number of characters were chosen from different stations in life, some humorous, many eccentric, and all exaggerated; for considering that the very act of appearance on the stage, in the glare of footlights, and in presence of a crowd is in itself an exaggeration, the points of character must be magnified to be in keeping. The connection of these characters with the story is always intimate—the character itself and its workings producing the various changes in the action; the same principle being carried out in the smaller points, 'good things,' &c., of the dialogue. In a modern comedy these are 'stuck over' the dialogue, as a bad milliner would sew on 'bows' and furbelows over a dress: they are neutral in colour, and do not belong to one character more than another; whereas in the old comedy they arise out of the progressive situations of the dialogue, and are precisely what would have come from a person in such a situation. As an illustration of this connection between character and story, Poole's humorous piece of *Paul Pry* suggests itself; which, though farcical and extravagant to a degree, owes its



vitality to this genuine principle—the prying inquisitive character of the hero produces the incidents; while they, in their turn, develop his character. In our modern comedies the eccentric characters are all detached; they walk in a parallel line to the story. These old characters too seem to have been drawn with overflowing spirits and exuberance, and with a never-flagging variety. They are also perfectly consistent with themselves; and we always feel a secret conviction that, granting a certain probability to the original conception, all they say and do follows naturally. It would be curious to compare the character of a yeomanry doctor, if given in a modern piece, with that of Ollapod represented by Mr. Clarke after a rather extravagant fashion. In the former, he would probably be one of a group of visitors at a country house; would take his share in the polite conversation, and introduce the eccentric peculiarity which distinguishes him, and which would probably be some medical recollection, which, repeated without variation, would constitute the ‘fun’ of the part. For this is the chief shape of modern humour—a catch-word or expression, always repeated, *à propos* or *mal à propos*. Now Dr. Ollapod has of course the well-known catch-word, ‘I owe you one!’ but this is merely a note of character. In other directions this odd nature breaks out with endless variety and luxuriance; all his illustrations, stories, and behaviour express the one idea—that of an apothecary ‘inoculated with military ardour.’ And what shows true art, his humour is leavened with a certain meanness, which proves a true knowledge of human nature. When Frederick Bramble insults him to his face, a modern play-writer would certainly have seen an opening for producing a laugh by exhibiting him in a deprecating and humiliating attitude, making apologies, &c. Colman makes him bluster and threaten, vaunting his medical position and rights in an illogical fury that is most natural and yet grotesque. The scene with Miss McTab is excellent comedy; and above all, he takes an important share in the story, which, in its turn, brings out his peculiarities. The whole play, in its legitimate five-act shape—not when compressed as it was lately to show off a particular actor—is full of spirit and vigour. Nearly every character is distinct and bold; and yet the whole has a more natural air than the pieces of the ‘tea-cup and saucer’ school, which are supposed to reflect our daily life. This story of the *Poor Gentleman* might, without much stretch of fancy, be supposed to have taken place in some highly rustic district; and though the oddities are exaggerated, it must be remembered that it is presented to us under the most unfavourable conditions. With the highly-trained and capable actors of the old school, an air of ease and nature was imparted which smoothed away all that was improbable.

PERCY FITZGERALD.

# A PILGRIMAGE TO THE SANCTUARIES OF ST. FRANCIS

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## I.

THE moon hung her bright lamp high over the city of *Il Serafico*, as we wended our way thither from the railway station. A silvery haze enveloped the landscape in a mysterious veil. All nature was hushed; the only signs of life abroad were the glinting fire-flies that flashed their brilliancy athwart the feathery fields of maize.

Suddenly we heard the low murmur of many voices; a bar of light lay across our road. It proceeded from the open door of a little way-side chapel, which was crowded to the very threshold with the poor contadini, who, after a hard day's field-work, were resting themselves by saying the rosary of the month of Mary at the *Spedaliccio*.

When St. Francis was carried in a dying state from Assisi to his favourite Santa Maria degli Angeli, it was at this leper-hospital, where he had often tended the wretched inmates, that he told his bearers to halt and turn his face towards his beloved birthplace. There, raising his hands, he prayed aloud for God to bless Assisi; for that hence would issue many champions of the holy faith. On the front of the little chapel is still to be seen a fresco, representing the saint with uplifted hands in the act of blessing. Looking now in the same direction, we see the fortress-crowned hill and city, probably with much the same distant aspect as in his day, except that there were fewer campaniles then, and the glorious *Sacro Convento* was not yet conceived. Now it is the one object that attracts the eye, and thrills the soul with pious memories of the millions of pilgrims whose hearts bowed down with holy joy at the sight of those serried arches that buttress round a mausoleum worthy of one of the greatest reformers the world ever saw. Yet, after studying the life of the saint, one cannot help feeling that this sepulchre was not the one St. Francis would have chosen for himself. By some hystriographers we are told that, out of humility, the saint desired to be buried near the spot, because the jutting hill was called the 'Devil's Neck,' and was the place where malefactors were executed; others say the edifice was erected here because, when Pope Gregory IX. gave orders for a splendid church to be built in honour of the holy saint, this was the most eligible site that could be found near the city.

The vast structure looks most imposing from the country; the great church seems enshrined amid the mass of conventual buildings,



and the lofty bell-tower lifts its beacon head proudly over all. In an artistic sense, no church in the world can compete with San Francesco: its walls were covered over with pictured scenes from his life by the pioneers of painting; many are ruined by neglect and damp, but enough still remain to form a precious museum for the edification and instruction of modern artists.

There are both interior and exterior stairs leading from the upper to the under church; the declivity of the mountain, on which the buildings stand, being so abrupt as to admit of all three churches having entrances from the terraced hill. The middle church, though obscurely lighted, has an unspeakably beautiful aspect in the perspective of its gloomy aisles; its great altar is jealously shut-in with high railing of antique iron tracery. It was beneath this altar that the remains of St. Francis were found in the year 1818. Incredible as it may appear, that though during his short career more than ten thousand disciples had entered his order, and that even during his life pilgrims came from afar to visit his hermitage, and that this church was built expressly in his honour and for his sepulchre, his remains having been removed there, in great pomp, about eighteen years after his death,—yet for more than six hundred years the exact spot of his burial-place was only conjectured. Many attempts had been made from time to time to discover it; some presuming it was under the altar of the upper church; still, the constant tradition always pointed to that of the lower.

In 1818 the last excavations were made, and carried on for twenty nights. They quarried through the foundations of solid masonry, and at last came to a plain square massive stone coffin. Piercing a hole through the thick slab, they could perceive human remains, and concluded they had arrived at the object of their search. Above the lid, and soldered to it, was a heavy grating of iron. This was detached, and several savans, doctors, &c. were called upon to certify to the character of these remains. They judged them to be the bones of a man, but nothing was found to prove that these were the remains of the saint; but the circumstance of the situation coinciding with the tradition, and the security with which the sarcophagus was imbedded in the solid earth, led to that conclusion.

Some old coins, much defaced, were found close to the body; also a few beads, which might be those of the rosary invented by his friend St. Dominic.

The precious remains were carefully enshrined in a double casket, and when the present crypt was excavated, partly from the foundations of the upper churches and partly from the native rock, care was taken to leave the coffin untouched, and itself and the masonry in which it is imbedded visible. As soon as the crypt was finished, with solemn procession the relics were carried through Assisi, once more deposited in their resting-place, and therein secured with three

locks; the key of one being kept by the pope, of another by the general of the order, and of the third by the superior of the convent.

The great convent, capable of giving roomy habitation to 1200 monks, and on a pinch to perhaps as many more, now shelters only twelve of its former inmates; two or three more are allowed to dwell there by paying rent for their rooms—these are situated in an off wing of the buildings. So the great refectories, with corresponding kitchens close at hand, where, no doubt, many a savoury mess was concocted on festival-days, no longer resound to the clinking of plates, or the sonorous voice of the *frate lettore*.

Dismally echo our solitary footsteps along the endless corridors of the dormitories. We peep into some of the cells, and find the large airy rooms opening on balconies that command an extensive view of the Umbrian valleys, with town-speckled mountains in the distance. The refectories beneath us also open on a wide cloistered loggia that runs round nearly the whole building. There are three or four interior square cloisters besides—one, I fancy, that is rarely seen by strangers; and the most picturesque of all is, or was, the Campo Santo. But the quiet beauty of the verdant shade, if possible, increases the painful impression made by seeing ricks of skulls and dead-men's bones piled up against the walls; some skeletons entire, others minus this part or that; others clothed with a leathery substance that once was flesh and blood; scraps of shrouds, of hair, of ribbon, thrown pell-mell on the heap. Such disregard for the remains of the 'faithful departed,' of those 'we have loved and lost,' must produce the reverse of a salutary effect on humanity in general. Many are the saints and fireside martyrs who have never been canonised. We might at least so far respect their remains as to let them lie quietly in their graves.

## II.

An iron-shod alpenstock was the pilgrim's staff that aided our weary limbs on the rugged road to the Carceri, or primitive hermitage, where St. Francis was wont to retire to meditate in solitude.

The way was long, the mountain steep—a real stony mountain not like those blooming Switzer hills, where plateaux of flower-decked meadows are terraced one above the other. Here were no 'purling streams,' no mossy bowers, no pines, no meadows: a barren mountain—fruitless, flowerless.

The day was dark and sultry. The valley beneath, clothed with glossy mulberry, trailing vine, and silvery olive, steamed with a grayish mist. On turning a shoulder of the mountain, below us we saw the gorge of a mountain torrent. Its friendly sides gave shelter to a grove of trees still gladsome with the tender hues of spring. We pass through a doorless gateway, and after some hundred yards, in answer to our ring, the door of the hermitage is opened to us.

We enter a small paved court, and Fra Rocco welcomes us to the Carceri. To give a pen-and-ink picture of the establishment is impossible. It is just a few bricks and mortar fastened on the face of an almost perpendicular rock, to help out the original refuge of St. Francis in the natural rock itself. Before us is a very small dingy chapel hollowed in the rock. Over the altar is a miraculous image of our Saviour on the cross. The good frate told us that he himself had witnessed prodigies performed in its presence. A few steps below is another little chapel, where is preserved an extremely ancient picture of the Madonna and Child; the same that was cherished by St. Francis himself. Down again some steep and narrow steps cut in the rock we come to the oratory of the saint, and see the stone on which he slept. It is now protected by an iron rail, placed there by St. Bernardino of Sienna. Over the altar is the wooden crucifix St. Francis always carried on his person. Many wonderful legends are told of all these images, very touching and beautiful, but which, luckily for some, are not articles of faith.

How appropriate is the name *carcere*, or prison! Few prisons, let us hope, are as damp, as dismal, as gloomy. Yet so natural and primitive are they, that, oblivious of the lapse of six hundred years, the mind easily pictures to itself 'Il Serafico' rapt in ecstasy in this dim dungeon.

Passing through a cleft of the rock, we stand on a ledge, and see before us the identical ilex-tree to whose warbling inmates St. Francis is said to have preached his famous sermon. A circuitous path leads to the other grottoes, where the disciples of 'Il Serafico,' after discovering his retreat, insisted on sharing his solitude. These cells are fissures or ledges of rock; such as that of St. Kevin and others nearer home. Our simple-minded guide makes us quite familiar with the stories of brothers Elia, Egidio, &c.

In contrast to the burning mountain-side, the air here in this ravine is cool, almost chilly. Beautiful wild-flowers grow on the mossy banks. As I gathered some, Fra Rocco told me that when Monsignor Wiseman (pronounced Vissmann) visited the Carceri many years ago, the frate was surprised to see him take out his knife and dig up the flower-roots, and asked him why he did it. Monsignor Wiseman answered that he would plant the roots in pots, and carry them with him to England; for that the ground in which they had grown was *terra santa*.

In truth a holy repose and sanctity dwells in this spot, imbued with hallowed memories.

Many yards beneath us, in the very bed of the mountain torrent, was planted a garden of lettuce. We wondered at the imprudence of planting them where the first heavy shower of rain must necessarily carry them all away.

'O,' said Fra Rocco, 'that is the most wonderful thing of all!'

Above us you may perceive how the mountains converge together into a funnel-shape, so that, naturally, this torrent is the only outlet for all the water that falls from them. Well, the loud raging of this torrent used to disturb the meditations of St. Francesco and his followers so much, that he prayed to God to stop its flowing. From that hour to this no water ever runs in this channel except on the eve of some great demonstration of God's anger. So sure is it, that we have orders to send word immediately to the holy father in Rome, who gets prayers offered up in all the churches. The last time it rushed down, carrying all before it, was in 1853; and before that, in 1832. On one occasion it was the forerunner of the cholera which broke out in these provinces, to which numbers of the inhabitants fell victims. Close following the other occasion came a terrible earthquake that destroyed many churches and buildings, though few lives were lost.'

'But, *mio padre*, where does all the rain that falls on these mountains escape to?'

With a shrug of the shoulders: '*Eh! chi lo sa?* It goes into the ground, and there's an end to it.'

After a refreshing drink from the holy well, much pleased with our visit to the prisons, we took leave of our amiable guide, who seemed the happiest of the happy in his solitary den.

### III.

How long after the death of St. Francis his followers adhered literally to his precept and practice of holy poverty, it is hard to say; but, to have an idea of what that poverty was, carried out *au pied de la lettre*, one must visit the little convent of St. Damiano, lying away beyond the town of Assisi, in a nook of the hill-side. This was the convent founded by St. Clare and her sister St. Agnes, two rich young virgins, who, inspired by the preaching of St. Francis, adopted the rules of his order, received the veil at St. Mary of the Angels, and established themselves here, where they soon had many followers.

We are shown the choir, with its original seats and kneeling-boards, than which nothing can be harder, or plainer, or poorer; the dormitory, where the nuns slept on pallets laid on the floor; the refectory, with its groined ceiling, dark with the smoke of centuries—precious in artistic eyes for its Rembrandtish tints of golden brown. Padre Felice points out to us that the seats, with wooden backs high against the wall, are those of St. Clare's time; but that the tables had been removed or mended, but always in the same form. He says the refectory has been in daily use ever since; and we see on the bare boards three mugs, platters, &c. for the few inmates that are left.

In the poor little church is preserved with great veneration the ~~ucifix~~ from which issued the command: 'Go, Francesco, and rebuild my church!' which order Francesco receiving literally, went back to his father's house, took a quantity of plate, linen, &c., sold them, and brought the proceeds to the Augustinian monks who then inhabited the convent. The monks refusing the money procured in this manner, he threw the purse in through the window and ran away.

In after times this injunction to St. Francis was understood in spiritual sense; for abuses he was destined to reform had crept in and cast obloquy on the holy church. We may still see the famous fresco, in the upper church of the Sacro Convento, that represents the saint exerting all his strength to support the Vatican, which is falling to pieces.

From San Miano, as the Assisians call it, to Gli Angeli, it is a good long walk on a hot summer's day: a short cut across the fields was most desirable. Kind Padre Felice came down the road to put us in the right track. Just as we were saying a 'few last words,' a beggar-woman, who had followed us in the hopes of a *mezzo baiocco*, cried out, '*Il serpe!*' and crossing the road to close where we stood, came the huge creature, or what appeared as such to our unaccustomed eyes. It was fully a yard and a half long and thick in proportion, and surely was *not* an ugly object, with its glossy skin and brilliant speckles. Still, its evil repute and the silent swiftness with which it writhed across the dusty road, transfixed us with horror. Not a pleasant introduction that to a ramble through corn-furrows. Some way on we asked a farmer, were there many serpents in the fields. He answered: Not many, but that we had better keep to the road as soon as we came to it; a piece of advice we followed with implicit confidence.

The church of Santa Maria degli Angeli seems capacious enough to embosom the multitudes of pilgrims that used to throng its aisles each year on the 2d of August. Under the dome stands the little church that is quite large enough to accommodate the ordinary congregation. The walls of this sanctuary are left in their integral simplicity, except where the gables are painted, one by Perugino, the other by Overbeck, his modern German imitator.

If one may say so, the whole life of St. Francis is contained in this oratory. It was his favourite house of prayer, and the spot where he was favoured with many visions. As we entered, a young monk was saying mass at the altar, who might be taken for '*Il Serafico*' himself—so mortified was his countenance, so pious his demeanour. As St. Francis was one night praying in this chapel, feeling much comforted in spirit, he was suddenly seized with compassion for the rest of mankind less favoured than he, and he prayed to God to have mercy on his people; and in memory of the great peace that had fallen on himself, that God would grant the same to



others, and that for this purpose he would accord a general pardon to all who at a certain season should visit this little church, he previously worthily received the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist. The pope being at Perugia at the time, St. Francis went to him and obtained from him the bull of the plenary indulgence for those to the faithful who fulfil the above conditions on the 2d of August. This was the origin of the renowned *perdono* of Assisi, to which of thousands of pilgrims flocked each year from the uttermost bounds of Christendom. The Italian government have discountenanced such assemblages for the last few years.

Of the original habitations of St. Francis and his disciples nothing now remains; indeed, they were often only huts made of boughs of trees. A little chapel is built over the spot where the great reformer breathed his last; and at some distance is another built over a sort of cellar, where he slept.

It is recorded that on one occasion, being troubled with temptations of the flesh, he threw himself on a bed of brambles, but the brambles suddenly changed into blooming roses; and close by he gathered a bouquet from the descendants of those same roses, which never bear a thorn!

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# COLONEL BENYON'S ENTANGLEMENT

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

IN TWO PARTS:—PART II.

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## CHAPTER I.

'There are some things hard to understand :  
O, help me, my God, to trust in Thee ;  
But I never shall forget her soft white hand,  
And her eyes when she looked at me.'

COLONEL BENYON had a hard time of it. Again, as in his Indian  
allow, grim death claimed him for his own, and was only to  
be kept at bay by prodigies of care and skill ; again the lamp of  
life flickered low, and for a while the sick man lay in a land where  
was darkness, knowing no one, remembering nothing, and suffering  
the unspeakable agonies of a mind distraught. There is no  
need to describe the variations of the fever, the changes from bad to  
better, the faint improvement, the threatened relapse. Through all  
the month of September Mr. Borlase came twice a-day, and the  
young physician twice a week, to Trewardell. They both de-  
clared themselves proud of their victory when Herbert Benyon could  
be fairly pronounced out of danger. They both acknowledged that  
they owed that victory, under Providence, to Mrs. Chapman.

She had been indefatigable, working and watching by day and  
night ; with a quiet patience that knew no limit. No other hand  
but hers had ever administered the Colonel's medicine, or smoothed  
his pillow, since she came to Trewardell ; no eyes but hers had  
watched him in the dead of the night. It was quite in vain that  
Mr. Borlase and Mrs. Johns had urged her to accept assistance, to  
have some one relieve her of her night-watch now and then. Upon  
this point she was inexorable. If she ever slept at all, she so-  
on roused her slumbers that they should not interfere with her duties.  
Sometimes in the dusk of the evening, when it was very nearly  
dark even out of doors, she would take a solitary walk in the gar-  
den for half an hour or so. That was her only relaxation. Sweet  
and gentle as she was in her manners she was rather an unap-  
proachable person, and she contrived to keep Mrs. Johns at a dis-  
tance ; which was somewhat galling to that worthy matron, who had  
never been able to beguile her into a little friendly gossip since she  
moved into the house.

'She's as proud as Lucifer, I do believe, in spite of her meek  
ways,' Mrs. Johns declared to her husband, with an aggrieved  
frown.

expression of countenance. 'Why, I've scarcely heard her voice half-a-dozen times since she's been here; and I can't say that I seen her face properly yet, that black hood she wears overshadows it so. I hate such popish ways.'

This hood which Mrs. Johns objected to had certainly a somewhat conventual aspect, and served to hide the nurse's pale sweet face much more than the cap in which Dr. Matson had first seen her. The physician perceived the change of headgear when he came to Trewardell, but considered it only a part of that harmless eccentricity which might be permitted to this lay sister of charity.

The time came at last when Herbert Benyon awoke from the long night of suffering and delirium to some faint interest in external things. He had not been unconscious all this time; on the contrary for long afterwards he had a keen remembrance of every detail of his illness; but mixed up with all the realities of his life had been the dreams and delusions of fever. He knew that throughout his illness by day and night a slender black-robed figure had sat by his bed-side, or flitted lightly about his room; he knew that a woman's soft hand had administered to his comforts day after day, without change or weariness; he knew that a very sweet sad face had looked down upon him in the dim lamplight with ineffable pity; but he had cherished strange fancies about this gentle watcher. Sometimes she was a sister he had loved very dearly, and lost in his early youth; sometimes she was Lady Julia Dursay. That she resembled neither of them mattered little to his wandering mind.

But this was all over now. He knew that he was at Trewardell and that this black-robed woman was a stranger to him.

It was upon a Sunday, a mild October day, towards sunset, that he felt himself for the first time able to speak to his patient nurse. A broad bay-window in his room looked westward, and he saw the evening sky with a warm rosy light in it, and heard the road cawing in the avenue, and the church-bells ringing for evening service.

Mrs. Chapman was sitting by the window reading, with her hood thrown back, and her dark-brown hair only shrouded by her muslin cap. She did not wear the hood always, though Mrs. Johns had never happened to see her without it. She had a habit of throwing it off at times.

The Colonel lay quite motionless, looking at the sky and at that quiet figure by the window, wondering dreamily who this woman was. Her profile was clearly defined against the soft light as she sat there, unconscious that he was watching her; and Herbert Benyon thought that he had never seen a lovelier face.

It was a spiritualised beauty, sublimated by some great sorrow, the Colonel fancied. The glory and bloom of youth were gone

though the woman was evidently young ; but with the loss of these she had gained in the charm of expression. It was a face that went to one's heart.

She turned from the window presently, hearing her patient stir, and came towards the bed. He saw that her eyes were gray, large, and dark, with a plaintive look in them.

'I did not know that you were awake,' she said gently. 'Let me alter your pillows a little, and then I will bring you some tea.'

It was the voice that had been with him in all his foolish dreams. It seemed as if he had come back to life out of a living grave, bringing only this memory with him. She bent over him, arranging the pillow, which had slipped to a position of torture on the edge of the bed. The dexterous hands made all comfortable in a few moments, while the lovely face looked down upon him.

'How good you have been to me all this time !' he said. He had uttered protestations of gratitude and regard many times during his delirium, but these were the first thoroughly sensible words he had spoken to her.

The surprise overcame her a little. Sudden tears started to her eyes, and she turned her head aside to hide them.

'Thank God !' she exclaimed earnestly ; 'thank God !'

'For what ?' asked the Colonel.

'That you are so much better.'

'I have been very ill, then, I suppose ?'

'You have been very ill.'

'Off my head, haven't I ? Yes, I know I thought myself up the country ; and that I could hear the jackals screaming outside. And I am really in Cornwall, down at Hammersley's place—poor Hammersley !—and you have been nursing me for I don't know how long ! You see I am quite rational now. I thought once you were my sister—a girl who died nearly twenty years ago.'

'Yes, you are much better ; but pray do not talk. You are very weak still, and the doctors would be angry with me for letting you talk so much.'

'Very well. I will be as quiet as a lamb ; indeed I don't feel capable of disobeying you. But there is one question that I must ask.'

'I do not mind answering one question, if I can.'

'To what beneficent influence do I owe your care of me ? what freak of fortune brought such a ministering angel to my sick-bed ?'

'I am here to perform a work of charity, that is all,' she answered quietly ; 'I am a nurse by profession.'

'But you are a lady !' he exclaimed, surprised.

'That does not prevent my nursing the sick.'

'Then you do not mean that you are a hospital nurse—a person to be engaged by any one who needs your services ?'

'You are asking more than one question. No; I am not a hospital nurse, nor do I take payment for my services.'

'I thought not,' murmured the Colonel, with a faint sigh of relief.

It would have shocked him, somehow, to discover that the patient watcher whom he had mistaken now for his lost sister—and for his false love—was only a hireling after all.

'I wished to perform some duty in the world, being quite alone, and I chose that of attendance on the sick poor. I have never wearied of it yet.'

'And have you been long engaged in this good work?'

'Not very long; but you must not talk any more. I must positively forbid that.'

The Colonel submitted very reluctantly. He was so eager to know all about this woman—this ministering angel, as he called her in his own mind. He repeated Scott's familiar lines in a low voice as she moved softly about the room making preparations for his evening meal.

Betsy Jane, the fat-faced housemaid, brought the tea-tray.

Mrs. Johns had avoided all actual attendance on the sick-room of late, offended by the nurse's stand-offishness. The Colonel did not want her, she said. He had that fine lady with her popish headgear.

Mrs. Chapman arranged the tea-things on the table by the bed—the small home-baked loaf, the tiny rolls of rich yellow butter, and a noble block of honeycomb on a glass dish. There was a nosegay of autumnal flowers, too, for the embellishment of the table; and altogether Herbert Benyon fancied that innocent repast the most tempting banquet that had ever been spread for him.

'Please sit there, and pour out my tea,' he said, in his weak voice. 'But see, you have forgotten your own cup and saucer,' he added, looking at the table.

'I will drink my tea presently.'

'You must drink it now, with me, or I will drink none.'

She complied; it was not worth while arguing with him about such a trifle. She brought the second cup and saucer, and sent where he ordered her. He looked at her very often as he sipped the tea she had poured out for him, and ate bread and honey, like the queen in the famous nursery rhyme. He looked at her, wondering what her life had been, with an intense curiosity only possible to a prisoner in a sick-room. He would have given the world to question her farther; but that was forbidden, to say nothing of the impertinence of such a proceeding. He was fain to lie there and look at her with fixed dreamy eyes, speculating idly about her and her history.

The patient had taken a turn, and the doctors rejoiced exceed—

ingly; but his progress even now was very slow. He lay for four long weeks almost as helpless as a child, attended upon day and night by Mrs. Chapman and a young man out of the stables, a handy young fellow, whose genius had been developed by the exigences of the case, and who made a very decent amateur valet. How he should have endured this dreary time without Mrs. Chapman's care and companionship, Herbert Benyon could not imagine. She brightened the dismal monotony of the sick-room, and lightened his burden for him more than words could tell; and yet she was by no means what any one would call a lively person. Indeed, after that close companionship of many weeks, Colonel Benyon could not remember ever having seen her smile. But her presence had an influence upon him that was better than commonplace cheerfulness. She read to him, and the low sweet voice was like music. She talked to him, and every word helped to reveal the wealth of a highly-cultivated mind. With such a companion life could not be ~~irksome~~, even in a sick-room.

Before the fourth week of that first stage of his convalescence was ended, Colonel Benyon had made many efforts to learn his nurse's history; but had failed utterly in the endeavour.

'My story is common enough,' she told him once, when he said that he was convinced there was some romance in her life. 'I have lost all that I ever loved, and am obliged to interest myself in strangers.'

'You are very young to be a widow,' said the Colonel. 'Had you been long married when Mr. Chapman died?'

A sudden look of pain came into her face.

'Not very long. Please do not ask me to recall my past life. My history is the history of the dead.'

After this he could not push his curiosity farther; but he was not a little tormented by his desire to know more. In the dead of the night he lay awake saying to himself, 'Who the deuce could this Chapman have been to leave his wife in such a desolate position? and what has become of her own relations? I would stake my chances of promotion that she is a lady by birth; but how comes a lady to be left to carry out such a quixotic scheme as this sick-nursing business?' For to the Colonel's mundane mind the nursing of the sick poor seemed an eccentric and abnormal employment for a well-bred young woman—above all, for a beautiful woman like this widow, with the classic profile and luminous gray eyes.

As soon as the Colonel was strong enough to totter from his bed to a sofa, Dr. Matson suggested a change of quarters.

'You must get nearer the sea,' he said; 'this flowery dell is all very well in its way; and you certainly do get a sniff of the Atlantic mixed with the perfume of your roses. But I should like

to plant you somewhere on the very edge of the ocean. There ~~is~~ a decent inn at Penjudah, now, directly facing the sea, built ~~almost~~ upon the beach; a homely place enough, but where you would ~~get~~ very good treatment. I think we might move you there with ~~ad-~~ vantage.'

The Colonel groaned.

'I don't feel strong enough to be moved from one room to ~~an-~~ other,' he said.

'I daresay not. There's a good deal of prostration still, no doubt; but the change would do you a world of good. We must manage it somehow—contrive some kind of ambulance, and carry you in a recumbent position. Mrs. Chapman will go with you, of course.'

The Colonel's face brightened at this suggestion.

'Would you go?' he asked, looking at his nurse.

'Of course she would. She's not done with you yet, by any means. You are not going to slip out of our hands for some little time, I assure you, Colonel Benyon,' said Dr. Matson, with professional jocosity.

'I do not wish; I am quite content to remain an invalid,' replied the Colonel, looking at his nurse and not at his doctor.

The physician saw the look.

'Bless my soul,' he said to himself, 'is that the way the cat jumps? The Colonel's friends won't thank me for getting him such a good nurse, if he winds up by marrying her. That look was very suspicious.'

The doctor had his way. The chief inn at Penjudah was quite empty at this late period of the year; and the best rooms, old-fashioned capacious chambers facing the sea, were at the patient's disposal. So one fine morning, in the beginning of November, while the reddened leaves in this mild western country still lingered on the trees, Colonel Benyon left Trewardell, which had been a somewhat unlucky shelter, it seemed.

Even on that last morning busy Mrs. Johns scarcely caught ~~so~~ much as a glimpse of the nurse's face; but just at the final moment, when the Colonel had been made comfortable in the carriage, wrapped up to the eyes in woollen rugs and tiger-skins, Mrs. Chapman turned and held out her hand to the housekeeper. She had her veil down, a thick black veil, and she wore a close black bonnet of a somewhat bygone fashion.

'Good-bye, Mrs. Johns,' she said in her low plaintive voice: 'This is the last time I shall ever see Trewardell. Please shake hands before I go away.'

There was something that seemed almost humility in her tone. The housekeeper drew herself up rather stiffly, quite taken by surprise; and then, in the next moment, her good-nature got the better



er resentment, and she took the proffered hand. What a slender hand it seemed in the grasp of Sarah Johns' stout fingers!

'I'm sure I bear you no malice, mum,' she said, 'though you kept yourself so much to yourself, as if other folks weren't good enough for you; and if you like to walk over from Penjudah any afternoon to take a cup of tea with me and my husband, you'll be heartily welcome. There's always a bit of cold meat and an apple-pie in the house.'

'You are very kind; but I feel somehow that I shall never see Edward again. May I gather one of those late roses? Thanks; I should like to take one away.'

She went to one of the standard rose-trees on the lawn, and plucked one solitary tea-rose—a pale primrose-coloured flower—a melancholy-looking blossom, the Colonel thought, when she took her place in the carriage with this rose in her hand.

'I don't like to see you with that pale yellow flower,' he said; 'it reminds me of asphodel, and seems symbolical of death. I should like to do away with that ugly black bonnet, and crown you with a wreath of bright red roses, the emblems of renewed youth and hope.' She looked at him with sad earnest eyes.

'I have done with youth,' she said, 'and with hope, except—'

'Except what?' he asked eagerly.

'Except a hope that I do not care to talk about—the hope of something beyond this earth.'

After this the Colonel was silent. There was something in those few words that sounded like a reproof.

Mrs. Johns stood in the porch watching the carriage drive away with a thoughtful countenance. 'What was it in her voice just now that gave me the shivers?' she said to herself, perplexed in spirit.

## CHAPTER II.

'So may one read his weird, and reason,  
And with vain drugs assuage no pain;  
For each man in his loving season  
Is fooled and is fooled of these in vain.

Charms that allay not any longing,  
Spells that appease not any grief,  
Time brings us all by handfuls, wronging  
All hurts with nothing of relief.'

COLONEL BENYON was in love. That rigid disciplinarian, that stern soldier, who had boasted for the last fifteen years of his freedom from anything approaching what he called 'an entanglement,' awoke to the consciousness that he was the veriest fool in the army, and that unless he could win this woman, of whose antecedents he knew nothing, for his wife, he was a lost man. That he

could return to the outer world, that he could go back to India and begin life again without her, seemed to him impossible. His world had narrowed itself into the sick-chamber where she ministered to him. All the voices of this earth seemed to have melted into that one low tender voice that read to him or talked with him in the long tranquil evenings. Until now he had scarcely known the meaning of a woman's companionship. Never had he lived in such close intimacy with any one, not even a masculine friend. But now he looked back at his hard commonplace life, the conventional society, the stereotyped pleasures, and wondered how he had endured so many years of such a barren existence. He loved her. For a long time—his idle weeks in that sick-room had seemed so long, giving him so much leisure for thought—he had struggled against this folly, if folly it were; but he had struggled in vain. He loved her. Her, and none other, would he have for his wife; and he told himself that it was after all, no great sacrifice which he contemplated making. That she was a lady he had never doubted from the first hour when, restored to his sober senses, he had looked at her face and heard her voice. It was just possible that she was born of a less noble race than his own, though he could scarcely bring himself to believe even this; it was more than probable that she was very poor. The Colonel was glad of this last fact. It pleased him to think that his wealth might give her a new and brighter life, surrounding her with all those luxuries and elegances which seemed the natural attributes of her beauty.

Was there any hope for him? Well, yes, he was inclined to believe his case far from desperate. There was a subtle something in her looks and tones at times that made him fancy he was not quite indifferent to her, that he was more than the mere object of her charity. Nothing could be more vague than these signs and tokens, for she was the most reserved of women—the proudest, he sometimes thought—and he felt convinced that she was herself unconscious of them. But, slight as they were, they were sufficient to kindle hope in Herbert Benyon's breast, and he fancied that he had only to wait the fulness of time for the hour of his confession and the certainty of his happiness.

He was not eager to speak. There was time enough. This tranquil daily intercourse was so sweet to him, that he almost feared to end it by assuming a new relation to his gentle nurse. He did not want to scare her away just yet, even if she left him only to come back to him later as his wife. He wanted to have her all to himself a little longer in this easy undisturbed companionship.

So the days and weeks went on. The Colonel grew so much stronger, that Dr. Matson bade him good-bye, and even Mr. Borlan began to talk of releasing him. He was able to take a short stroll in the sunniest hour of the autumn day, leaning on his cane, and occasionally getting a little help from his nurse's supporting arm. He

was very fond of Penjudah: the scattered houses on the sea-shore—the curious old-fashioned High-street straggling up a hill—the sheltered nook upon the grassy hill-side, that served as a burial-ground for the population of Penjudah—the rustic lanes, from which one looked right out upon the broad Atlantic—all these things grew very dear to the Colonel, and it seemed to him that he could be content to live in this remote western haven for ever with this one woman for his companion.

It was very nearly the end of November, but the weather was wonderfully mild in this region, the days bright and balmy, the evenings clear and calm. The Colonel stopped to rest sometimes in the burial-ground, seated on a moss-grown granite tomb, with his face towards the sea, and Mrs. Chapman by his side.

He had told her all the story of his past life, even that ignominious episode of Lady Julia Dursay's ill-treatment. It was his delight to talk to her. He confided in her as he had never done in any one else. He had such unbounded faith in her integrity, such a fixed belief in her good sense. He had talked to her of his friend Hammsley, and had told her the story of the guilty mistress of Trewardell.

'Strange that we should both have come to grief about a woman, isn't it?' he asked; and Mrs. Chapman owned that it was very strange.

'You'd heard the story before, I daresay,' remarked the Colonel. 'I suppose all the gossips of Penjudah know it by heart?'

'Yes,' she answered, 'everybody in Cornwall knows it.'

It was the last day of November. Mr. Borlase had again talked about taking leave of his patient, and the Colonel was sitting on his favourite tomb, the memorial of some race whose grandeur was a memory of the past. He began to think the time was drawing near when he must make his confession and hear his fate. He was no coxcomb, yet he had no fear of the result; indeed, he was certain that she loved him. While he was meditating this in a dreamy way, in no hurry to speak, and quite satisfied with the happiness of having the woman he loved by his side, Mrs. Chapman suddenly broke the silence.

'You are so much better, Colonel Benyon,' she began—'almost well, indeed, Mr. Borlase says—that I think you can afford to spare me now. I have stayed with you already much longer than I felt to be really necessary, only'—she hesitated just for a moment, and then went rapidly on—'only yours was a critical case, and I did not wish to leave you while there was the faintest chance of relapse. There is no fear of that now, and I am wanted elsewhere. There is a little boy in one of the cottages up the hill dying of consumption. His mother came to the hotel to speak to me last night, and I have promised her to go to him this evening.'

'This evening!' cried the Colonel, aghast. 'You mean to leave me this evening!'

'To go to a dying child, yes, Colonel Benyon,' the nurse answered reproachfully. 'There is so little that I can do for you now—for I suppose you may be trusted to take your medicines regularly—you really do not want me any longer.'

'I do not want you any longer!' repeated the Colonel, 'I want you all my life. I want you for my wife!' he went on, laying his hand upon her shoulder. 'I cannot live without you. You must stay with me, dearest, or only leave me to come back to me as my wife. We have no need of a long courtship. I think we know each other thoroughly as it is.'

'You think you know me thoroughly as it is!' the woman echoed, shrinking away from him, and standing with her face turned towards the sea, only the profile visible to the Colonel, and upon that the impress of a misery that struck him to the soul.

'My dear love, what is this?' he asked. 'Have I distressed you so much by my avowal? Am I so utterly repugnant to you?'

'Your wife,' she murmured, as if she had scarcely heard his last words, 'your wife!'

'Yes, dearest, my beloved and honoured wife. I did not believe it was in my nature to love any one as I love you.'

'That any man upon this earth should care for me!' she murmured; 'you, above all other men!' And then turning to him with a calmer face, she said decisively, 'That can never be, Colonel Benyon. You and I can never be more to one another than we have been. The wisest thing you can do is to wish me good-bye, here where we stand, and forget that you have ever known me.'

'That is just the last thing possible to me,' he answered impetuously. 'There is nothing upon this earth I care to live for, if I cannot have you for my wife. You must have known that I loved you—You had no right to stay with me so long; you had no right to let me love you, if you meant to treat me like this at the last. But you do not mean to be so cruel; you are only trying me; you are only playing with your victim. O, my darling, for pity's sake, tell me that I am not quite indifferent to you!'

'That is not the question,' the woman replied quietly. 'Have you thought of what you are doing, Colonel Benyon? Have you counted the cost? Have you thought what it is to intrust your name and your honour to the keeping of a woman of whom you know nothing?'

'I know that you are an angel,' he said, putting his arm round the slender figure, trying to draw her to his breast.

Again she shrank from him—this time with a gesture so repellent, that he drew back involuntarily, chilled to the heart. 'Do not touch me,' she said. 'You do not know who and what I am.'

'I ask to know nothing,' he cried vehemently. 'If there is any secret in your past life that might divide us, hide it from me. Do you think I am going to bring the scrutiny of a detective to bear upon the antecedents of the woman I love? Blindly I give my happiness and my honour into your keeping. I see you, and love you for what you are—not for what evil fortune may have made you in the past.'

'You do not know the weight of your words,' she answered sadly. 'I thank you with all my heart for your confidence, for your love; but that which you think you wish can never be. It is best for us to part this very day, this very moment. Let us shake hands, Colonel Benyon, and say farewell.'

'Not till you have told me your reasons,' the Colonel cried imperiously. 'I may know those, at least.'

'I do not recognise your right to question me. I cannot explain my reasons.'

'But I will know them,' he cried, seizing her wrist. 'I have been fooled by one woman; I will not be trifled with by another. I will know why you refuse to be my wife. Is it because you hate or despise me?'

'No, no, no; you *know* that it is not that!'

She looked at him piteously, with a look that said as plainly as any words she could have spoken, 'You know that I love you.'

'Is it from any mistaken notion of fidelity to the dead?'

'No, it is not that. Yet, Heaven knows, I have reason to be faithful to the dead.'

'What is it, then? You must and shall tell me.'

'For pity's sake, spare me. You are torturing me, Colonel Benyon.'

'Give me your promise to be my wife, then, and I will not ask a question. There can be no reason strong enough to divide us, if you love me; and I think you do.'

'Heaven help me!' she sobbed, clasping her hands with a piteous gesture.

To Herbert Benyon those three words sounded like a confession. He was sure that she loved him, sure that his will must conquer hers in the end.

'Yes,' she cried passionately, 'I do love you. Nothing could excuse such an admission from my lips but the knowledge that in this hour we part for ever. I do love you, Colonel Benyon; but there is nothing in this world that would induce me to become your wife, even if you knew the worst I can tell, and were yet willing to take me, which you would not be.'

'You are wrong,' he exclaimed with an oath. 'There is nothing you can tell me that can change my resolution, or diminish my love.'



'Do not promise so rashly,' she answered, ashy pale, and with tremulous lips.

He drew her to the old granite tomb, and persuaded her to sit down beside him, seeing that she was nearly fainting.

'My love, I do not wish to be cruel,' he said tenderly. 'I do not seek to lift the veil of the past. I am content to love you blindly, foolishly, if you like. I will do anything to prove my devotion, will shape the whole course of my future life for your happiness. There is nothing in the world I would not sacrifice for your sake. Be generous, for your part, dearest. Say that you will be my wife, or give me some adequate reason for your denial.'

She did not answer him immediately. There was a silence of some moments, and then she said in a low voice:

'You have a friend to whom you are very much attached, Colonel Benyon, a friend who is almost as dear to you as a brother. I have heard you say that.'

'What, Hammersley? Yes, certainly; Hammersley is a dear good fellow; but what has he to do with my marrying as I please? I should not consult him about *that*.'

'You were talking the other night of that guilty creature—his wife.'

'Yes, I have spoken to you about his wife.'

'You have—in terms of reprobation which were well deserved. Have pity upon me, Colonel Benyon—I am that wretched woman!'

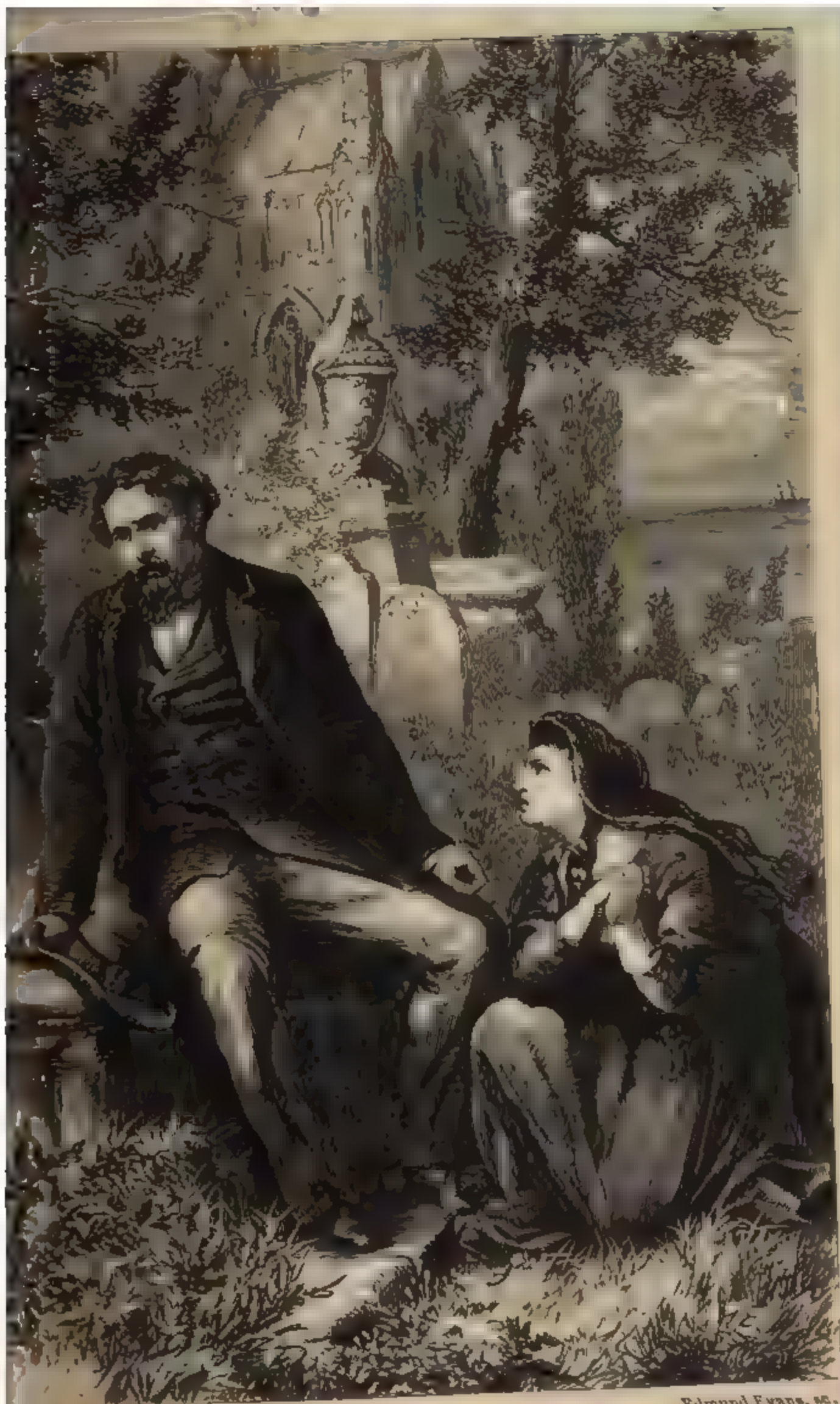
She had slipped from the tombstone to the turf beside it, and remained there, half crouching, half kneeling, in her utter abasement, with her face hidden.

'You!' exclaimed the Colonel, in a thick voice. 'You!'

The blow seemed almost to crush him. He felt for the moment stupefied, stunned. He had been prepared for anything but this.

'I am that wretched woman. I do not know if there is the shadow of excuse for my sin in the story of my life; but, at any rate, it is best that you should know it. George Champney and I were engaged to be married long before I saw Mr. Hammersley; and when he went to India, we were pledged to wait till he should come back and make me his wife. We had known each other from childhood; and I cannot tell you how dearly I loved him. It seems a mockery now to speak of this when I have not even been faithful to his memory; but I did love him. I have mourned him as truly as ever any man was lamented upon this earth. From the first my father was opposed to our engagement, and my stepmother, a very worldly woman, set her face against it most resolutely. But we braved their displeasure, and held our own in spite of them. It was only when George was gone that their persecution became almost unendurable to me. I need not enter into details. Captain Champney had been away more than two years when I first met





B. D. Friston, del.

Edmund Evans, sc.

MRS. CHAPMAN'S CONFESSION.



Mr. Hammersley. We were forbidden to write to each other ; and had suffered unspeakable anxiety about him in that time. It was only in some indirect manner that I ever had news of him. When Mr. Hammersley first proposed to me, I refused him decisively ; it then followed a weary time in which I was tormented by my stepmother, and even by my father, who was influenced by her in his business. I do not think any man can understand the kind of domestic persecution which women are subject to—the daily reproaches, the incessant worry. But I went through this ordeal. It was only when my father brought home a newspaper containing an announcement of George Champney's death that my courage gave way. They let me alone for some time after this, let me indulge my grief unmolested ; and then, one day, the old arguments, the familiar reproaches began again ; and in an hour of fatal weakness, worn out in body and mind—for I had been very ill for a long time after that bitter blow—I yielded.'

She paused for a little ; but the Colonel did not speak. He stood upon the granite tomb, looking seaward with haggard eyes, motionless as a statue, the living image of despair. He could have said me anything but this.

'You know the rest. No, you can never know how I suffered. The false announcement in the paper had been an error, common enough in those days, Captain Champney told me, when he came on me one summer morning near Trewardell like a ghost. He had heard of the report in India, and had written to a common friend of ours, entreating her to let me know the truth ; whether she had attempted to do so, and had been in some manner prevented by my father or my stepmother, I cannot tell. Another Champney had been killed. The mistake was only the insertion of the wrong initials ; but it was a fatal error for us two. He came to me to remind me of my promise ; came determined to take me away from my husband. I cannot speak of the events that came afterwards. There was no such thing as happiness possible for either of us. We were not wicked enough to be happy in spite of our sin. You know how they found George Champney lying dead upon the sands of Blankenburg one bright September morning. After that I had a dangerous illness, during which I was taken to a Belgian convent, under my husband's influence, I believe, where I was tenderly nursed until I recovered. They knew my story, those spotless nuns, and were kind to me. I stayed with them as a boarder for a year or so—after Mr. Hammersley obtained his divorce ; and it was there I learned to nurse the sick. I was not destitute ; a sister of my mother's, knowing my position, settled a small annuity upon me ; and on that I have lived ever since. Six months ago I was married with a yearning to see the place where the most tranquil years of my life had been spent. I knew that Mr. Hammersley was

living abroad; and I fancied that I ran no risk of recognition in returning to this neighbourhood. I knew how much misery and illness had changed me since I left Trewardell. It was a foolish fancy, no doubt; but I, who have nothing human left to love, may be forgiven for a weak attachment to familiar places. I came to Penjudah, thinking that I should find plenty of work here of the kind I wanted. I had no intention of coming any nearer to Trewardell, where I must, of course, run considerable risk of being recognised; but when Dr Matson urged me to come to you the temptation was too strong for me, and I came to see the dear old place once more. That is the end of my story; and now, Colonel Benyon, I have but one word more to say—Farewell!’

She rose from the ground, and was going to leave him; but he detained her.

‘You have almost broken my heart,’ he said; ‘but there is nothing in this world can change my love for you. I still ask you to be my wife. I promise to cherish you with a love that shall blot out the memory of your past.’

She shook her head sadly.

‘It can never be,’ she answered; ‘I am not vile enough to trade upon your weakness or your generosity. Let me be faithful to the dead, and loyal to you. Once more, good-bye.’

‘Will nothing I can say prevail with you?’

‘Nothing. I shall always honour and revere you as the most generous of men; but you and I must never meet after to-day.’

He pleaded with her a little longer, trying by every possible argument to vanquish her resolution; but his endeavours were in vain. He knew that she loved him; he felt that he was doomed to lose her.

And so at last she left him, sitting in the quiet burial-ground in the pale winter sunshine, with all the glory of the Atlantic before him, and the stillness of a desert round about. Even after she had left him he determined upon making one more attempt to win her. He found out the place where she lived, and went to that hamlet in the early dusk, bent upon seeing her once more, upon pleading his cause more calmly, more logically than it had been possible for him to do in the first heat of his passion. He found the house and a very civil good-natured woman, who told him that Mrs. Chapman had left Penjudah two hours before, for good. She had gone abroad, the woman said.

‘To Belgium, I suppose?’

‘Yes, sir, that was the name of the place.’

As soon as he was strong enough Colonel Benyon went to Belgium, where he spent a couple of months searching for Florence Hammersley in all the convents. It was a long wearisome search, but he went through with it patiently to the end, persevering until

he found a quiet little conventual retreat six miles from Louvain, where boarders were admitted. It was the place where she had been. His search was ended; and the woman he loved had been buried in the tiny convent cemetery just a week before he came there. After this there was nothing left for the Colonel but to go back to India to the old familiar life. It was only his closest friends who ever perceived the change in him; but, although he never spoke of his trouble, those who did thoroughly know him, knew that he had suffered some recent heart-wound, and that the stroke had been a heavy one.

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## THE HARVEST MOON

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GOLDEN globes hang in the orchards,  
Purple splendours flush the vine :  
Sails the white moon through the heavens,  
Harvest glories round her shine.

Droops, with heavy dew-tears laden,  
In the balmy autumn night,  
On her stem the passion-flower,  
Veils in mist her beauty bright.

In the beechen mast the ringdove  
Wakes the dormouse with a sigh ;  
Plaintively she coos and murmurs  
O'er the babes that 'neath her lie.

Flows the river through the rushes,  
Shimmering in the silver glow  
Of the bright reflected heavens ;  
Onward still the ripples go,

Eddying with ten myriad bubbles—  
Globules bursting into air—  
On beside the reeds it prattles,  
Passing through the meadows fair.

Blue forget-me-nots are sleeping,  
Lilies white their petals close ;  
Stamp'd on earth, and stamp'd on heaven,  
Shows the signet of repose !

ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.



## AMERICAN YACHTS AND YACHTING

' Build me straight, O worthy master !  
Staunch and strong, a goodly vessel,  
That shall laugh at all disaster,  
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle !'

LONGFELLOW.

THE islands of the Hawaiian group and the Polynesian Archipelago may, perchance, present fairer and more fairy-like alcoves to an artist's gaze, the frozen ocean of arctic Greenland be embayed into grander gulfs, and the Melbourne admirers of the mud-banked arms of Port Phillip loudly proclaim its noble expanse of land-locked water; but to those who have seen all these, in addition to other embouchures of sunny seas that are even more highly extolled, the three most magnificent harbours in the world in regard to their extent and picturesque effect are, the Bay of Naples, the Bay of San Francisco, and the Bay of New York; the last mentioned combining 'in one harmonious whole' the special attractions of the two former, and thus being, perhaps, their superior in a landscape sense.

And yet it would be reasonably fair to suppose, that, beyond believing it 'a pretty considerable sort of an anchorage,' and 'a tolerable smart opening in the harbour line,' as I have heard it described in the native vernacular, not one American probably in a thousand of those who see it almost every day of their lives ever gives a thought to its beautiful proportions and fine natural advantages. The old biblical axiom, that one can never be a prophet in one's own country, applies equally well to inanimate objects as to human beings. We act up to it conscientiously enough ourselves in abandoning our home beauties of scenery to eulogise the hackneyed charms of the slow-going Rhine and Alpine-Club-wearied Switzerland: it is the same case with our *soi-disant* cousins across the Atlantic. In spite of their possessing in the Hudson alone—not to speak of the great Mississippi, or 'Father of Waters,' as the Indian style it, and other giant streams—a river whose grandeur, scenic variety, and breadth and warmth of colouring are possibly unrivalled on either continent; in spite of their being able to point to peaks of the Rocky Mountain ridges that skirt Nevada and the Western territories which eclipse in height and boldness of outline those that encircle the Genevan lake; and in spite of their knowledge of the magical Yosemite Valley and the wondrous mammoth waterfalls and forests of California, you will still hear the citizens of the great Republic repeating all the stale platitudes with which



we are all acquainted, and going into ecstatic raptures over the pictorial properties of the 'old world,' with never a word to say for those lying to their hand in the new. I do not merely refer to the travelled 'ile-strikers' and 'shoddy' aristocracy, who, like other *nouveaux riches*, may be expected when they go abroad to ape the opinions and extravagances of others; but there is hardly an American writer of note who has not apparently seemed to prefer repeating, parrot-like, all that has been already said over and over again about the scenery of 'the European continent,' to selecting that of his own land for portraiture.

Even rare Washington Irving, in style and descriptive power an American of Americans *more suo*, was no exception to this rule. It was not until he was actually forced to tear himself away from the witcheries of Paris and the charming literary society of the Lady Blessington stamp that then existed in London, that he was able to settle himself down at his delightful 'Sunnyside' seat on the Hudson and dilate on the word-painting of those natural beauties, with which he now found himself surrounded, that Fenimore Cooper had loved and learnt before him; and who is there that would not prefer the genuine realities of Sleepy Hollow—an actual place, by the way, which I have seen—and the stories and sketches that he wrote under these later influences, to all the 'Crayon' papers which first brought his name into English notoriety? Look at Longfellow, too, from whom, as a poet, one would expect more of the patriotic spirit and 'sacred love of country;' why, he has written more verse about Italy, Spain, and Germany almost, than any touching his real Fatherland! As for eminent American artists, only two, to my recollection, have thought their own land proper worthy of the efforts of their pencil—Jasper Cropsey and Bierstadt; the former delineating with faithful skill the gorgeous colouring of the Indian summer and other tranquil effects of river, lake, and forest scenery; while the latter chooses the more grandiose geological features of the Far West and cold North as subjects for his canvas. These are both great painters, and would be a credit to any country, for they are at the head of the United States Academy of Design, and are equal in landscape to the best masters of our own or the French school—indeed they have frequently exhibited over here, and their works have not only been warmly admired, but have passed 'the crucial test' of finding ready purchasers. But still they are the only two out of the many who appear to think they can find a native field for the employment of their talent and skill. All other American artists, without exception, who can paint at all, and are able to come across a generous Mæcenas—not at all a hard matter in the States, with all their love for the 'almighty dollar'—flock to Roman and Parisian *ateliers* for their studies, to the neglect of what a prodigal nature has provided for them at home in a series

of charming pictures by land and sea that seem to cry aloud notice.

Amongst these, according to *my* opinion, New York Bay is of the most noticeable. If you will kindly imagine the figure of a *written 8* with the upper loop not quite completed, you will have a very good idea of its typographical appearance, as it really consists of two distinct portions, one of which is the harbour properly called, and the other the Lower Bay. The latter, or unfinished circle of our figure, is an extensive estuary formed by a hook-shaped low-lying bank of sand, almost imperceptible even when the tide is out, whereon is moored the well-known Sandy Hook lightship, the goal from and to which the ocean steamers time their passages across the Atlantic. The down-trending coast of New Jersey—state supposed for its lawlessness to be ‘outside the Union’—completes the other arm of the bay, that is really more like an inlet of the sea than anything else, with its high forest-crowned New Jersey Highlands, on which stand as beacons by day and night to perplexed seeking mariners two twin giant towers, with great staring lanterns that wink and blink in the darkness with their round goggle eyes. Here I remember seeing, as she lay floating flat on the water like a raft, and nearly invisible until one got close to her, the ‘monitor,’ the turret ship *Onondaga*, that the French government purchased in 1867 from Uncle Sam, in company with the *Dunderberg*, a much more formidable shell-backed monster. Her deck was at such a slight elevation from the water-line, that, when inspecting her before her departure, I had actually to *step down* to it from out of an ordinary row-boat! I well recollect her new Gallic officers, who came over to take possession and navigate her to Cherbourg, expressing some fears for their safety in achieving the perilous breadth of ocean that lay between them and their destination; but although she had to put back twice through stress of weather, she got safely to France after a longish run, and is now, I believe, rotting somewhere in the dockyards of Brest or Toulon. At the upper end of the Lower Bay the Sandy Hook shoal joins on to the flat shores of Long Island, which gradually begin to curve inwards, following suit to the New Jersey coast-line, until, at a place appropriately christened ‘The Narrows,’ they together form a neck or channel that unites the two loops of our fancy figure.

On the one side of this watery passage—the right-hand side going up to the city—is Fort Lafayette, an imposing-looking three-tiered fortress armed with heavy Rodman guns; but whose correlated red-brick-built walls would not, I think, stand even the mild bombardments from the thirty-five ton ‘Woolwich Infant.’ It was here that a large number of Confederate prisoners were confined during and after the war, in cells lying under the bed of the channel, so they were secure enough in all conscience. I had once

pleasure of going through these gloomy casernes; and it appears to me very probable that, however justly the Unionists may have complained of the Southern's way of treating their captives, a good deal might have been urged in extenuation on the other side, if only a tithe of what I have heard were true.

Opposite to Fort Lafayette is Staten Island, which is not at all unlike the Isle of Wight in many respects. It is villa-studded throughout its length and breadth, the Manhattanese migrating hither in the hot months of summer, and sharing the honour of its inhalitation with the mosquitoes, which, crossing over from the adjacent swamps of New Jersey, are to be found there in swarms, in shoals, in battalions. They are a curse to all thin-skinned people, of whom, I'm thankful to say, I am not one—the mosquitoes, I mean; not the inhabitants of Manhattan's isle.

From Staten Island, the narrow channel running between it and the Long Island strip that forms the farther shore, expands again into the wide circular basin of New York Harbour, a broad bosom of water lapping the northern and eastern mouths of the Hudson, that is here divided for some distance upwards by the oblong, wedge-shaped island of Manhattan, on which the great 'smart' city of Cousin Jonathan is built. The capital it should be by rights, as it is really in importance, were it not for the capitolian Washington, which had to be 'run up' on a neutral 'district of Columbia,' so that no individual state might take umbrage against any other for the distinction of having the chief town of the country within its borders. Altogether, from its beginning at the sand-bank of Sandy Hook to its junction with the bi-branched Hudson, New York Bay exactly extends some forty miles, forming two completely sheltered harbours which could accommodate all the fleets of the world with anchorage ground and wearing room at one and the same time, 'without putting itself' in any way 'out of its way.' It is a grand bay, grand in every sense of the word. The only place like it I have ever seen, is the harbour of Halifax, Nova Scotia, which is somewhat of a smaller edition of similar characteristics. Pity it could not be transported over here by means of Aladdin's genii, for I fear it is not appreciated at its proper worth where it lies.

But the reader may pertinently remark, What on earth has all this got to do with American Yachts and Yachting? In the language of Hiawatha, 'I will answer, I will tell you,' a very great deal. Is not the official mansion of the New York Yacht Club, the representative one *par excellence* of America, situated on Staten Island? and does not the regular match course lie around the Sandy Hook lightship? of whose position I have been trying to give you some faint idea, and where I have watched many a gallant contest when 'rippling waters made a pleasant moan,' and airy zephyrs were pro-

pitious. Above all, is there not on the banks of the East River a worthy shipwright and yacht builder, known to all by the name of 'Pete,' the works of whose hands have already torn laurels from the brows of a Ratsey and a White of Cowes? a 'master' that not only construct you 'staunch and strong, a goodly vessel according to the lines of the talented Transatlantic bard I have just quoted, but one which would be as well

'a beautiful and gallant craft,  
Broad in the beam, that the stress of the blast,  
Pressing down upon sail and mast,  
Might not the sharp bows overwhelm;  
Broad in the beam, but sloping aft  
With graceful curve and slow degrees,  
That she might be docile to the helm,  
And that the currents of parted seas,  
Closing behind with mighty force,  
Might aid and not impede her course.'

Yes, 'that's a fact,' as the down-easters say; so I think I have demonstrated to you sufficiently enough that New York Bay, the bay of bays of the New World, and the Hudson river, have a slight connection with the subject: if it has not been so made plain, then 'it does not matter,' to adopt the philosophy of poor Toots when Miss Dombey declined his addresses.

The New York Yacht Club musters under its purple-blue ensign a squadron, all told, of some fifty craft, ranging in size from ten-ton cutters, that a cat's paw might capsize, up to enormous schooners of three and four hundred in burden, according to the scale, or 'any other man's,' for that matter—vessels as large as the larger than those old-time barques that were thought big enough to brave the stormy equinox, and cross the seas to the Indies, and come back laden with 'sugar and spice, and all that's nice' fifty years ago.

As a rule, the yachts are built more for racing purposes than for comfort; consequently their cabin accommodation shows a marked difference to that of English craft, although their fine lines can easily eclipse ours, while their speed, either 'on a wind,' or in 'a chop to windward,' is beyond question, as Mr. Ashbury of the New York Club could bear ample testimony. However deficient in speed and preeminence, our American cousins are not wanting in pluck; their recent challenge to the London Rowing Club shows that when they are bound to lose; in yachting it is quite another matter, for here both in pluck and skill they have taught the 'old world' amateur sailors many a lesson. The advent of the fast schooner 'America' in 1851 gave us the first inkling that they were something on the other side of the Atlantic; and when she defeated off all the matches she made at Ryde, it was thought a



But the great original ocean yacht race in 1866 was a much 'bigger thing,' as they say over the water, and opened a new era in 'match-making.' As I was in America when this contest was decided on, and saw the yachts start, although I had not the pleasure of witnessing their arrival on this side, perhaps it will not be thought to be a *réchauffé* of an old story, if I briefly allude to the race here, particularly as it was the pluckiest thing ever attempted in yachting annals: I mean the *first* one that occurred in mid-winter six years ago. Since then, ocean races would of course possess no more interest than an ordinary ascent of Mont Blanc: there is no *κῦδος* to be gained by them.

Three vessels contested for the palm of victory in this naval feat, as the reader may remember—the *Henrietta*, the *Fleetwing*, and the *Vesta*; the two former being regular schooner-built keel boats, and the latter what is called a 'centre-board' vessel, that is, fitted with a shifting keel, which could be drawn up at will; a great advantage when sailing in a light breeze before the wind, on account of its less resistance to the water, but rather a disadvantage, almost a danger, in a rough chopping sea with a head, or foul wind. All the yachts were of nearly equal tonnage, some two hundred according to the American scale, which is about one-third less than ours. With regard to crews and officers, the *Henrietta* carried twenty-two seamen, her owner, Mr. Bennett—the son of the proprietor of the *New York Herald*, and the vice-commodore of the New York Yacht Club; and her sailing master, an old and experienced navigator, Captain Samuels, who once sailed a celebrated American clipper ship, called the *Dreadnaught*, from New York to Liverpool, before the days of steam and ten days' trips, within fourteen days, a wonderful passage under sail for a heavy ship, and the quickest ever known. The *Henrietta* also had a first and second mate, and two supernumeraries, twenty-eight souls on board in all. The *Fleetwing* had only twenty-two 'of all sorts,' and the *Vesta* the same number. The owner of the winning yacht, the *Henrietta*, deserves additional credit from the fact of his being the only one of the competitors who had the courage to essay the voyage in his own vessel; the other owners came over in one of the Cunard steamers to see the finish and reap the fruit of the race, should they win, without risking its perils.

Of course the contest was for money. Our Transatlantic cousins do not perceive the beauty of honour and glory unless they have something tangible to show for it. In observance of this feeling, a 'sweep' was entered into by the three owners of thirty thousand dollars each, the winner to pocket the whole, and thus gain a profit of sixty thousand greenbacks—some 10,000*l.* in our money—a prize worth taking. The course was from Sandy Hook bar to Cowes, no time allowance, and the first vessel to win.

On Tuesday, the 11th December 1866, at one o'clock in the afternoon, they all started. It was a beautifully clear frosty day, remember well, with the sun shining brightly, and the sky as blue as azure and without a cloud; but it was blowing strongly and the wind was intensely cold, the winter having set in, as usual, with steady severe frost. A number of pleasure steamers and tug-boats in one of which I had secured a passage, went down the bay to see the boats off; and what with the amount of gaudy bunting displayed, the bands playing 'Yankee Doodle' and 'The Star-spangled Banner'—national ditties both, and equivalent to our 'God save the Queen'—the cheering, the hooraying, and the fine weather, the scene was intensely exciting and enlivening.

After a warning gun to 'get ready,' the final signal was given and away the three yachts started on a bowline with a good eight knot breeze, the *Henrietta* lying well in shore, and having the worst of it at first, although she greatly retrieved her position when all got out into the offing. From a look at her log, which I saw when she returned to the States the following spring, I observed that she lost sight of her competitors at nightfall on the first day at sea; and it is a remarkable fact, that none of the yachts sighted each other again until all met in Cowes roads. The *Henrietta* ran two hundred and thirty-five miles in the first twenty-four hours from the start; after that she averaged regularly fourteen knots per hour during the rest of the voyage. When half way across the Atlantic, she experienced very heavy weather, losing six men overboard, and having to lay-to for five hours; she sprang a leak aloft and it must have been a ticklish thing to all when the carpenter entered the cabin with a lugubrious face, and announced that the yacht was making water fast. However, Mr. Bennett gave orders to hold on at all hazards; the leak, which probably resulted from sudden strain, as suddenly stopped, the canvas again was spread and the *Henrietta* continued her course, with all plain sail set, as if nothing had happened. It is worthy of note that she sailed on the same even tack throughout the entire passage, and lost no ground; or one should more properly say 'water'—by it either, for she hardly veered eleven miles from a straight line drawn on the chart between her point of departure and landfall at the 'Needles.' Passing this latter place at half-past three on the afternoon of Christmas-day, the *Henrietta* arrived at Cowes the same evening completing her voyage from Sandy Hook in exactly 13 days 22 hours and 46 minutes, the winner of the ocean yacht race and the thirty thousand-dollar sweepstakes. The *Fleetwing* came in to the port one hour and twenty minutes after midnight on the same day, and the *Vesta* at four o'clock *ante meridian* the following; so it was really a very close race, having only a few hours intervening between them all, after competing for over three thousand odd miles.



Regarding it by its results, it cannot, however, be said that their lengthy contest gave any more practical proof of seamanship than a simple race of fifty miles on the course of the R.C.Y.C. would have done. The very best of the yachts never having once to tack proves this. Of course it says much for the speed of the boats, although little for all those various arts and dodges of making the most of every puff of wind and direction of currents, or set of tide, with which our yachtsmen manage to circumvent each other. As far as the feat goes of crossing the Atlantic, that, in itself, apart from the race, was nothing; for I remember reading in the English papers of the same year, the gallant and really useful exploits of a small schooner-yacht of some hundred and fifty tons, belonging to one of the Thames clubs, I believe. This little vessel, the *Themis*, owned by a Mr. Hannem, not only sailed across the ocean to the West Indies, but proceeding down the coast of South America, went through the Straits of Magellan, where her owner occupied himself in taking soundings and observing the nautical phenomena of the land around Terra del Fuego for the benefit of other mariners in general. It must not be forgotten either that Lord Dufferin made a venturesome voyage in a craft less than half the size of the Atlantic-race competitors to Greenland and Spitzbergen, the details of which are so well known to us in his vividly written *Letters from High Latitudes*.

It is a matter of regret that Mr. Bennett sold the *Henrietta* after she had so distinguished herself. The last time I saw her was along the quays of New York, discharging a cargo of oranges and lemons which she had imported from Bermuda, as she is now in 'the fruit trade.' A sad come-down for a gallant racer, almost as ignominious as for a Derby winner to be seen in the metropolitan streets drawing a four-wheel cab filled with patients for the Smallpox Hospital! The *Dauntless*, the new representative of the vice-commodore of the New York Yacht Club, is not nearly so swift as her predecessor, in spite of her being larger, more roomy, and incomparably better fitted up. She has a long low black hull, reminding one of those daring smuggler vessels and pirate schooners that *Maryatt* immortalised; while, to follow Longfellow:

'and everywhere  
The slender graceful spars  
Poise aloft in the air,  
And at the masthead,  
White, blue, and red,  
A flag unrolls the stripes and stars.'

I have often thus seen her lying off the usual yacht anchorage at Hoboken on the Hudson river. She is a hundred and twenty-seven feet long, of twenty-six feet beam, and ten feet depth of hold. Her masts are wonderfully lofty, the main and maintop up to the truck

measure exactly a hundred and fifty feet from the deck; while her fore and foretop mast are but twenty feet less. She spreads over eight thousand square yards of canvas; but that does not count for much, as she requires almost a hurricane to drive her along. The *Cambria*, it may be recollected, beat her on the last 'international race' from Queenstown to Sandy Hook by some four hours and a half, and the *Cambria* is by no means entitled from her speed to be considered a representative of English yachts generally.

American racing-craft are seldom handicapped like ours. They generally have a spin 'right out and home again,' and the distance round the light-ship at Sandy Hook from the club-house on Staten Island is usually a fair criterion for trying speed. Often indeed for seamanship too, as beating up the Narrows against a head wind is as hard a struggle as the Ryde cruisers find it to weather the Nab, and beat back in the teeth of a stiff sou'-wester to that endless pier on which the fair ladies of Wight's Isle 'most do congregate. Our cousins are, however, more fond of matches than regattas; and they have got some clipper sailers. Why, poor Mr. Ashbury, 'plucky' as he was, ran into the jaws of defeat out there; for there are probably at least ten separate craft of the New York Yacht Club that could give the *Cambria* or *Livonia* dozens of lengths, and yet beat them all to nothing. The *Sappho* and the *Dauntless* that were over here are by no means the fastest American yachts, although they *do* possess tidy 'heels' of their own. The New York schooners are as yet still far ahead of ours, in spite of the *America's* coming in 1851 having put up our builders to 'a wrinkle or two;' the *Guinevere* is probably the only boat that Cowes could show which would hold her own against the pick of Transatlantic sporting craft.

In a former paper\* some notice was taken of the annual cruise which the squadron of the New York Yacht Club takes in company. This is by far the most pleasant and noteworthy of their customs over the water; and it might, one would think, be imitated with advantage by our nautical authorities in such matters. I do not think I have ever seen a prettier spectacle than this setting out of the yacht fleet on its yearly 'outing' up Long Island Sound. With their dancing little hulls and dazzling white sails and movements in rotation, in due order according to the commodore's signal, they resembled some miniature navy exercising, even as our Channel Fleet was drilled when Mr. Childers hoisted his flag as Lord High Admiral, and took command in person. As Byron writes somewhere, to quote another poet than our New World bard:

'He that has sail'd upon the dark blue sea  
Has view'd at times, I ween, a full fair sight;

\* 'Summer Life in the States,' in September Number, 1871.

When the fresh breeze is fair as breeze may be,  
The white sail set, the gallant frigate tight ;  
Masts, spires, and strand retiring to the right,  
The glorious main expanding o'er the bow ;  
The convoy spread like white swans in their flight,  
The dullest sailer wearing bravely now,  
So gaily curl the waves before each dashing prow.'

Besides the New York Yacht Club, there are many other similar local associations in the various States lying along the Eastern seaboard, such as those belonging to Boston and Philadelphia ; but they are mainly comprised of small cutters and cat-rigged boats that do not require any crew to keep up. Of these lesser satellites, the chief clubs are those of New Jersey and Brooklyn Long Island, with the latter of which I am better acquainted than with any instituted by the New Englanders or the inhabitants of the City of 'Brotherly Love.' Ah ! how often have I watched the dainty little 'cat-rigged' clippers of Brooklyn careering along the East River under a cloud of sail which seemed capable of burying them bodily at any time ! These boats carry one huge triangular long sail, with the 'sheet' fastened to the foot of the mast, and a swinging boom larger often than the hull of the vessel. The mast is stepped very far forward, almost in the bow in fact ; and in appearance the boats very much resemble the picture of the one with which we are all familiar in *Robinson Crusoe*. I mean that in which that ill-fated mariner, who has caused so much delight to the boys of England, ran away from his Moorish master when his faithful Moresco slave got devoured by a lion on his going to fetch a jar of water to satisfy the cravings of Crusoe after his dried raisins : he called it, I think, a boat with a 'leg-of-mutton sail ;' but the mariners style such craft 'cat-rigged.'

As they are fitted with enormous centre boards, or false keels, capable of being lowered to any extent to counterbalance their sail power, they are very safe ; and can brave harder weather than you would believe on first seeing them.

The Brooklyn yachts have a delightful cruising ground up the East River. They can glide along past the old Navy Yard, where the ancient Constitution, a relic of the war with England in 1812, keeps guard like our good ship St. Vincent at Portsmouth ; both being quite as efficacious in the present day against iron-clads and torpedo vessels ; only the Constitution does not look as graceful as our old hulk, as she has only her lower masts standing, and no rigging to boast of. These yachts have also the choice of essaying the passage of the dangerous 'Hurl' or *Hell-gate*, where the frigate Macedonian, of our Navy, was wrecked, in the year seventeen hundred and sixty something, while on her way to New York with the pay of brave General Burgoyne's army, which afterwards capitu-

lated to the colonial forces: perhaps the lack of *l'argent* something to do with the catastrophe. 'Hell-gate'—I prefer most distinctive appellation—is certainly an 'ugly'-looking place. It is a sort of series of rapids in the channel running between Emigrant Asylumed-Ward's Island in the centre of the river, the mainland of Long Island State that connects the Sound with the Hudson. Although the rapids are decidedly treacherous, the navigation intricate, the water is very deep: so deep, that when the Great Eastern went over to New York, it was first thought to bring her up to the city through Long Island Sound and Hell-gate, as the bar at the mouth of the harbour was believed too high for her pass. However, it is perhaps fortunate that the trial was made, as the current through the passage is something fearful when the tide changes. It is said, that if a man should be unfortunately lost overboard in the rapids here, his body is never found again anywhere, in which respect the spot seems to possess the peculiarities of the fabled Maelstrom.

But I think we have seen enough of the East River with screaming, whistling little tug-boats, and 'Hell-gate,' Long Island Sound, and all. Fancy can picture the flitting yachts weaving their course along these romantic waters; and as the last white sail disappears from sight, hear the echoes of 'Hail Columbia' reverberating in the distance, hurled back from the palisaded heights of the lordly Hudson down to the grand Neversink Highlands at the foot of New York Bay, until they are lost to sound at sea off Sandy Hook.

JOHN C. HUTCHESON.

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## A VISIT TO SCOTT'S GUN MANUFACTORY

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We had frequently been struck, when looking over files of American papers, with the many allusions they made to the wonderful shooting powers of 'Scott's guns.' According to some of these accounts, 'No coon held himself safe within *speaking distance* of their sharp detonating crack,' &c. 'Gobblers,' as wild turkeys are called, 'upon viewing a sportsman armed with a Scott's breech-loader, instantly set to work to *pluck* each other, well knowing they had no chance of escaping the spit;' while deer, duck, 'canvas-backs,' reed-birds, and hosts of minor feathered quarry, were perpetually being 'blown from Scott's guns,' like Sepoys in the Indian Mutiny. Nearly every American newspaper report of 'Hunting Club' matches chronicles, as a rule, the fact that numbers shoot with Scott's make.

Now being curious in all concerning sporting guns, our curiosity became excited as to who this celebrated maker could be. It is a well-known fact that Americans are not by any means partial to guns manufactured in their own country, and will always buy in preference an English gun. On this account, we were inclined to arrive at the inference that this gunmaker might possibly be Scott of Birmingham, in England.

Some little time since, having occasion to visit that large manufacturing town, it occurred to us that we might readily verify our suspicions, and at the same time gratify a long-pent-up wish to view a large gun-factory in full work, and see the rough wood and iron turned into the elegant and perfect gun. As it turned out, we were right in our conjecture; and we found that the 'gobbler-slaying,' 'coon-smashing,' and 'tarnation shooting-irons,' so popular in America, all emanate from the well-known firm of Messrs. W. and C. Scott and Son, whose manufactory is in Bagot-street, Lancaster-street, Birmingham. Having readily obtained permission from the proprietors, we enjoyed the rare sight of seeing 'how guns are made,' and hasten, while the knowledge is still fresh in our memory, to commit the process to paper, for the benefit of those who have not seen it.

The barrels are tubes made by welding strips of fine twisted Damascus iron together, in which state, fresh from the forge and the hammer, they are sent to the gunmaker.

On receiving the tube, it is examined by putting strong acid upon it, in order that the figure of the twist or welding may be made prominent, and any minute flaws seen at once; also to show that the welding is even or true. After this, it is subjected to hydraulic pressure with hot water, in order to see that the inside of the tube



is as free from flaws as the outside. If not found perfect, the tube is returned to the forger, who replaces it with another for trial.

The tube is now placed in the hands of a clever workman to be straightened inside, a very delicate and scientific matter, and one which is only thoroughly learnt by many years of patient study. This is called 'shading,' and though the workman has nothing to guide him in making the tube true but his eyesight, he is able by long practice to detect the slightest crookedness either in a rifle or shot-gun barrel. After this, the tube is fixed on a lathe to be turned in places to gauges in order to make the outside of the tube true with the inside, and prevent the barrel being thick at one place and thin at another. It is then struck up with a striker or square kind of file, to bring it to the weight and size required.

The two tubes are now jointed or placed together to make the pair of barrels—they are put together with mathematical accuracy for which purpose a very accurate level is used. A triangular groove is now made under and between the barrels at the breech end, the smallest end of the groove being that nearest to the muzzle of the barrels; into this is fitted the steel lump (for fastening the barrels to the action), and the barrels and lump are brazed together.

After the brazing, the barrels are cleansed and prepared for the top and bottom ribs, which are then fitted and soldered on. They are then plugged at the breech end and sent to a very severe fire proof, and if marked perfect by the proof authorities, they are examined with a powerful glass, to see if the proof has thrown off any gray or flaw. If not quite perfect, they are then returned to the forger, and other tubes are given in their places. In this stage—that is, partly struck up—the barrels are handed over to the actioner.

We have above described the manufacture of the shot-barrel, but rifle-barrels are made with, if possible, even more care, as the acme of a barrel-maker's art is to put a pair of rifle-barrels together perfectly parallel. They are at first made with a slight wedge between the noses of the two barrels, and made to make the bullet cross slightly; they are then shot from a rest, and if found to cross the wedge is withdrawn, bringing the noses of the barrels closer together, and making them consequently shoot closer, and cross less; the wedge is again and again withdrawn if necessary until the barrels shoot perfectly alike.

Ascending from the ground-floor, we come into the show-room. Here may be seen a magnificent collection of highly-finished firearms from the bijou saloon pistol to the heavy 'elephant exterminator.' Upon a closer examination, we find that all the barrels of the weapons are made of either Damascus-twist or laminated steel, the makers believing that it is necessary to the maintenance of the prestige to use only the lightest and strongest metal in the manufi



ture of this most important part of a gun. Here, too, are gorgeous weapons—'Durbar' presents for Indian rajahs, richly inlaid and gilt, upon which all that is picturesque and fantastic in the engraver's art has been lavished.

*En passant*, we learn something of the various tastes which characterise different nations in their choice of sporting guns. English country gunmakers, whom Messrs. Scott supply in the wholesale way, invariably give orders for the best material and workmanship. The Russians are prone to carrying heavily-ornamented firearms; while our American cousins, like ourselves, prefer plain and serviceable weapons, but much stronger than those in vogue in this country for sporting purposes. As the lagoons and prairie swamps of America abound in wildfowl, it is necessary to use heavier charges, and consequently stronger weapons are required to withstand them; while at home a light gun is all that is required for the 'stubble' or the 'moor.'

Any of the popular breech-loaders which we have described in these pages can be had at Messrs. Scott's, who, like all gunmakers, can make any inventor's gun, by obtaining a license from him. A capital gun, an invention of Mr. William M. Scott, much struck our fancy, as it seems to embody features of strength and durability, which are notably absent in many breech-loaders thrust into the hands of the public by unscrupulous gun-sellers, both in England and America. The chief improvements in 'Scott's top-lever gun,' as compared with those in other weapons, lie in drilling the false breech in a nearly vertical line between the face and back to a point near the bottom of the breech, where the bolt traverses a line which is capable of being turned upon its vertical axis inserted in the aperture thus formed. Upon the lower end of this pin is formed a stud or projection, fitted to engage in a recess in the bolt, which travels in grooves on either side on the bottom face of the breech-action. To the head of this pin is connected the lever working over the strap of the false breech, which is turned from left to right; and by its connection through the pin with the locking bolt, the action of that bolt is coincident with, and consequent on, the motion of the lever. The position of the lever is convenient, and the formation and fitting of the parts very strong. Should the lever-spring break, the 'locking' can be effected equally well, which is an important feature in this improvement. The spring is to make the lever 'self-closing.' An objection has frequently been raised to the central-fire gun that, in the ordinary weapons sold, it cannot be seen whether the gun is loaded or not without 'unlocking' it. Scott's Patent Indicator obviates this difficulty, and can be fitted to any breech; it can then be seen at a glance whether the gun has a cartridge in or not. Perhaps, however, the best of all improvements patented by this firm is their Adjustable Joint Hook. To the sportsman abroad this 'compensat-

ing lump' is invaluable, as it secures him against the joint getting loose without the means at hand to remedy it. The object of this invention is to preserve the close contact of the breech ends of the barrels against the break-off, when the barrels are shut down notwithstanding the wear to which the joint is exposed. Messrs. Scott, in their top-lever central-fire gun, also embody the well-known patent solid double bolt. In the show-room we also see plain Lefauchaux guns, adapted for either pin or central-fire cartridge; side lever 'snap-actions'; the Purdey open bow-guard, with lever fitting snugly in it. Messrs. Scott also showed us a new gun doing away with the nipple entirely, strong pistons, held in by a cross pin, taking its place. We saw this new principle applied to a strong 10-bore 'duck gun,' destined for the American market. Upon closing the gun after the cartridge is inserted, in order to prevent the 'strikers' coming in contact with it, by an ingenious arrangement the extractor pushes the 'strikers' out of the way, an improvement on 'strikers' attached to the hammers.

We also saw .450 double 'express' rifles, and .500 double 'express' rifles for tigers, deer, or other game, firing a 'shell' with heavy charge; and the .120-bore 'miniature express' might also be seen in this veritable exhibition of firearms. 8-gauge double and single rifles for African sport, which fire a 'shell,' the explosion of which inside a mammoth would make *him* appreciate his antediluvian existence. 12-bores for Indian tigers, too, are here, the accuracy and perfection of which may some day, in the hands of one of our military Shikarrees, do deadly work on the striped and prowling 'devil cat' of the jungle.

Since the instinct of our wild and savage ancestors, who hunt for their subsistence, is still so strong in us, by all means let us have the best weapons to effect our purposes; whether to fell the huge elephant in his tracks, or knock over the plump and demure-clad partridge in the stubble. Times, however, *have* changed. Many years ago it took a platoon of guards half a day's firing with the old 'Brown Besses' to make a poor elephant in Exeter Char 'drop tears mingled with gore, his knees shook, &c.'—*sic* writes the historian—'and finally obeying even in his agony the voice of his keeper, he knelt down close to the bars, when a *final volley* in his ear put an end to his existence.' We should think so indeed 'a *final* volley in his ear' ought to have been thought of—to mangle an Irish bull—at first, surely.

If 'the poor beetle, that we tread upon, in corporal sufferance feels a pang as great as when a giant dies,' the sufferings of the elephant must have equalled in intensity 'an army of giants.' But as we said before, 'times *have* changed,' and we gladly turn from such a picture of brutality and clumsiness to the manly and self-possessed figure of the Duke of Edinburgh standing alone beneath

the burning sun of Africa, awaiting the charge of a furious elephant. On comes the Behemoth, making the ground shake beneath him; but nothing daunted, our royal sportsman raises his English breech-loader, a slight puff, a tiny crack, and down falls the giant quarry, *stone dead*. So much for our advance in the science of manufacturing sporting rifles in England. *Mais reverons à nos fusils*. Having sufficiently enjoyed the sight of Messrs. Scott's guns and rifles in their show-room, we proceed on our voyage of inspection round the factory part of the premises.

In the next department we enter, amidst the giddy whirr-r-r and distracting buzz-z-z of machinery, we see and have explained to us the delicate process of cutting breech-pieces and action-bearings from the best malleable Swedish iron. The hands are at work at automatic lathes making nipples and strikers; others turning levers and grinding with cutters at what is termed foreparts, drilling and slotting the hole in the solid action, which is made of the finest forged iron without a flaw. Next we come to the action-fitting department, where the breech mechanism is fitted to the barrels. This operation requires uncommon skill and dexterity, and a large staff of thirty or forty brawny-armed, clean-looking, honest English mechanics are engaged in fitting this, filing that part of the 'action,' and 'generally putting things destined to play upon each other's surfaces into smooth juxtaposition. This is the most difficult part of gun-making—to abolish friction. There is a separate workman to each part of the action, and these workmen work only at those parts. The actions are filed with care; jointed, lever fitted, cross-pin fitted, and detonated for the nipples and strikers; after which the barrels are put into the action and go to a proof for the second time, this time with the action on. If perfect, both barrels and action are again marked.

The barrels and action are now ready for stocking. The stocks, of the best all-heart walnut, are kept for several years, every particle of moisture being driven out of them. They are weighed when sent in fresh from the grower, and are weighed every year in order to see how much less they are in weight than when first put away. Messrs. Scott tell us that they never use a stock until it shows perfect freedom from all moisture. The piles of wood we see stored are pieces of Italian, Tunisian, and English walnut all collected for this purpose—this is very expensive, sufficient to make a stock costing even in the 'rough' as much as thirty shillings. We should think that a fancy for a handsome stock could be easily gratified from the number of really fine close-grained stocks which we saw.

A hard close-grained stock is now picked out, and the stocker commences his work by letting the strap of the action into the wood. The stock is then roughly cut into shape with a draw knife. The lock plates are then let in, then the inside work of the locks is put

on to the plates, and the locks are let in. The locks are smoked over an oil lamp, until they are covered with a thin coat of smoke black, and fitted to their places; now wherever the wood wants cutting away a black mark is left; all these black marks are cut off with a small crooked chisel, and again the locks are fitted in to have the black marks cut away again and again, until the locks fit and bed everywhere.

We were next conducted to that part of the factory in which the action locks, triggers, and screws are polished, engraved, and case-hardened.

The action is polished by the application of wet emery upon a piece of some hard wood used with both hands in the manner of a file; it is afterwards burnished with a steel burnisher, which gives it a dazzling polish; it is now ready for the engraver. The whole of the inside small work of the locks, as well as the lock plates, has to be polished in the same manner as the action. The engraver now takes the action in hand; first he draws on the glittering iron the pattern of the tiny scroll which we so much admire with his graver; this done, he takes another tool in hand, and begins to cut out the iron, and almost as quickly as we can write it, he has done the larger lines and commenced the smaller scrolls inside them. When the action has been engraved in this manner, it is shaded properly, and is ready for the case-hardening process. The parts to be hardened are placed in a stout iron pan, which is then filled up with bone dust. The parts are kept from touching one another by layers of the same; the pan is then put in the centre of a large, clear, bright fire for upwards of an hour. The pan is then emptied into a tub of water. This is termed case-hardening, and imparts the varied colours seen in the ironwork of a gun.

Up and down, and down and up again, we peregrinate through labyrinths of stairs and corridors, resounding with filing and hammering. Verily much walking is a weariness of the spirit, and our *fidus Achates*—a Jenner and Knewstub's 'Eunomia'—tells us we have spent two whole hours thirty minutes and twenty-five seconds in viewing the largest and most complete gun manufactory in Birmingham, and, for anything we know to the contrary, in the world. After bidding adieu to Messrs. W. and C. Scott and Son, and thanking them for their having shown us the whole of the process of manufacturing guns, we retrace our steps to the Great Western Hotel, pondering curiously as we go over the myriads of animals, birds, and possibly reptiles—not omitting a chance human being—which in the course of the next ten years will be relieved by means of Scott's famous guns of any farther trouble in escaping either the 'snares of the fowler,' or of leading at best 'a precarious existence' in the illimitable prairies and woods of the Far, Far West.

CADWALLADER WADDY.



## THREE TO ONE

Or some Passages out of the Life of Amicia Lady Sweetapple

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'ANNALS OF AN EVENTFUL LIFE'

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### CHAPTER LVI. HARRY FORTESCUE MAKES UP HIS MIND TO PROPOSE.

POOR Harry Fortescue ! He at least had not had a good night. He tossed and turned, and his feet sought every corner of his bed, feeling for that cool spot which it is not destined to find in sweltering June in London. We very much doubt if Dives would feel as much pleasure in that drop of cold water as we all of us feel when we discover a cool place in bed. So Harry Fortescue had tossed and turned. He tried every position in vain : he kicked off the clothes ; he lay on his back, his sides—first one side and then the other ; on his face, with his arms out of bed ; and when he had exhausted all these permutations, he thought of sleeping with his head out of the bottom of the bed—we need not say that all Mrs. Boffin's beds were regular old four-posters—with his feet on the bolster. At last he exclaimed, 'I can't stand this any longer,' and jumped out of bed, threw up the window, and looked out. The air was full of that fragrance of new-mown hay which in June makes even the London night air sometimes so balmy.

'O,' he thought, 'if I were with her away in the sweet country among the new-mown hay, that would be joy !' Then he thought of Ascot, and despised it. What were races to him ? All at once he looked on them as a degrading amusement, and if it had not been for Edward's sake he would throw up the engagement.

'Poor Edward,' he thought, 'how happy he is ! Shall I ever be so happy ? After all, I make no progress. Edith must never be suffered to go out as a governess, and I must find out how her mind stands as to me. I wonder if she ever thinks of me, not as a benefactor—what a cold thing it is to be a benefactor ! one might as well be a grandfather as a benefactor to any one. Benefactor ! the very word is ridiculous ; what the slang term calls "un-English." No, not as a benefactor, but as a shorter and prettier word—the comparative of love. What is the comparative of love ? Why, lover, to be sure. Yes, that will do as the comparative of love.'

So he went on looking out at Mrs. Boffin's best front bedroom window, the wonder of policemen and market-gardeners, quite lost

in his thoughts on Edith, and careless of what all the police and market-gardeners in the world thought. You see that scarlet fever of the heart had completely mastered his moral constitution; and that Harry Fortescue was now hopelessly in love with Edith Price. It was quick work, we must all admit; but love and hate are the two plants which grow fastest in the human heart. Sown yesterday, shooting up to their full height to-day, to-morrow cut down and withered. Yes, the heart of man is the only true forcing-house. They say that of all growing things the quickest is bamboo; it will grow ten inches in a night. Yes, love is like bamboo; like it in more things than one—it is tender and grows when it is young, but it hardens and stiffens quickly into a stick. How many are there not in life, who have found their early life turned in age into a stick for their own backs!

So Harry Fortescue stood there, and thought and thought, and the dusty blazing summer sun came out without one breath of morning freshness, and the great desert of London streets was parched and waterless as ever, and the Arabs that abound in the East came out of their holes and began to prowls about. Even when a man is in love he sometimes feels ridiculous, and when a man feels in that state he becomes like the ostrich, and tries to hide his head. As soon, therefore, as Harry Fortescue felt ridiculous he left the window, and withdrew to his dingy four-poster, where he fell asleep only to be awakened when Mrs. Boffin's maid-of-all-work, an intelligent maiden of seventeen, came down the creaking stairs to her daily toil.

It has been often remarked, or if not it ought to be remarked, that lovers, as a rule, rise early, and husbands late. There are exceptions, but that is the rule. Husbands and wives seldom have great thoughts to keep them awake, or to arouse them from their slumbers—they had their great thoughts when they were young and in love; but lovers always have great thoughts, or thoughts that are great in their own imaginations: so it was with Harry Fortescue. That hour's sleep he had just had had stilled his restlessness. After the maid-of-all-work had roused him, he lay between his sheets like a lamb, thinking of Edith; and his first great thought was, that he would go and propose to her that very day; and his next that he was sure she would make him the very thing he needed—a loving faithful wife. You see how wise he felt in his own conceit. He was, with his great thoughts, settling not on his own fate—that, in all conscience, is hard enough to do—but the fate of another human being, and that being a woman to whom he had never spoken one word of love, and of whose feeling towards him, except in the odious light of a benefactor, he was utterly ignorant. Pray observe, too, the courage of love. Like faith, it can remove mountains, or it fancies it can remove them, which is more



the same. Harry Fortescue, from the moment that he was in love with Edith Price, never doubted. As he lay there thinking on her, not at all distracted by the cries of the milkman or the scavenger, he was as firmly convinced that he should marry her as any zealot or bigot of the efficacy of his creed as the only means of salvation. He believed in himself, and so he must have her. But when young persons of either sex have this firm faith in themselves in matters of love, and do not get the object of their desires, what comes of it? Many things come of it—for in this very contrary world these shipwrecks happen every day of the week—despair, apathy, broken hearts, suicides, actual or figurative: and it is as well to know that a figurative or moral suicide is quite as melancholy to read of as any extinction of life by drowning or poison, by knife or pistol. The reason is not far to seek. When the human heart is set on anything, it cannot bear to be upset—to have all its bread, thrown out for many days, it may be, on the waters, returned to its own bosom, not as bread, but as sop. Then it asserts its rights; falls back on its own natural dignity; will not love a generation which has treated it so badly; grows morbid, and hates and detests it; cares for no one and no thing; will not have any rival near its own throne, though that throne be only a willow chair; disdains even to live in such a wretched world, where the heart cannot have its way, and so ends in actual or moral death—a sad example of the vanity of human wishes.

But let us return to Harry Fortescue. He at least was not in this melancholy state. With him it made all the difference that he had not asked and been refused. He did not suppose, this spoilt and pampered child of love, that any woman would refuse him. Thus he lay still, till it was decent time to get up. He was a gentleman, and would have scorned to confound the poor maid-of-all-work by breaking in upon her when she was on her knees at her daily devotions to her work, scrubbing the stairs, brushing the grates, and whitening the door-steps. Her occupations, those labours which sanctified her life, were too holy for him. He lay in bed listening till he knew she had done her weary task; and he knew it at once when the portly form of Mrs. Boffin, going down stairs to 'her' breakfast, made them creak as with the weight of ten maids-of-all-work. There is something in ownership and tyranny which makes owners and tyrants—and Mrs. Boffin was a tyrant—tread earth and stairs in such a lordly way. You can always tell a landlord from a tenant by the depth of his footprints. With all his courage, which was undoubted, we question whether Harry Fortescue would have dared to get up before Mrs. Boffin went down. We are not sure, good lodger though he was, that Mrs. Boffin would not have given him warning on the spot. That either of 'her gentlemen' should have got up before she had looked over their letters, and put out

their tea and sugar, was something so abhorrent to Mrs. Boffin's nature, that she would not have tolerated it for an instant. If lodgers wanted to rise early, they might go somewhere else. Besides, if they got up early they would wear out the furniture, sitting on the chairs and lying on the sofas ever so much longer. They might sit up as long as they liked, but as for getting up early, it was quite out of the question.

When Harry and Edward met at breakfast, Edward could not help saying:

'I have seen you looking fresher, Harry.'

'How can a fellow look fresh,' said Harry, 'when the nights are so warm?'

'I feel fresh enough,' remonstrated Edward.

'Ah, but then you're younger, Ned; and besides, you're happy.'

There was an audacity about Harry's 'younger' which made Edward Vernon smile, for he was by just three months the younger of the two.

'Younger, indeed!' said Edward. 'All I know is, that when you die of old age I shall think it time to look out. Happy, I am indeed. But why can't you be happy? I am sure Florry will be very glad to see you at Ascot.'

'Florry Carlton is nothing to me,' said Harry. 'I don't care if I never see her again.'

This declaration so shocked Edward Vernon that he ceased talking, and the two friends finished their breakfast in silence.

'I'm going out, Ned,' said Harry, 'and I sha'n't be back till dinner-time. We will dine at the club as usual.'

'We're engaged to dine, both of us, with Mrs. Grimalkin,' said Edward.

'What a bore!' said Harry. 'How I do hate all the house of Tabbicat!'

'They're a very old family,' said Edward, who, not being crossed in love, was not nearly such a radical as Harry had become in two days; 'they say they came from the East.'

'I quite believe it,' said Harry. 'I shouldn't wonder if they came all the way from Egypt, where they used to worship cats. Puss-in-Boots was one cadet of the family, and Dick Whittington's cat another. Didn't Dick Whittington get his cat from the East? What I wish is, that all the old cats would go back to the East.'

'You're very hard upon poor Mrs. Grimalkin for asking us to dinner,' said Edward; 'but you know you can never be so rude as not to go after accepting her invitation.'

'Something may happen to me beforehand which may prevent my going,' said Harry, in a tone which gave Edward Vernon quite a turn.

But while Edward was thinking of suicide, Harry was bent

proposing to Edith Price ; and as he was quite sure that she would accept him, he felt that he should be so happy that he could never bear to sit out one of Mrs. Grimalkin's dull dinners.

'There's another thing against Mrs. Grimalkin,' he said, as if he had found out against her all the seven deadly sins at least : 'she wasn't at all kind to the Prices when poor Mr. Price died.'

'That's a long time ago,' remonstrated Edward ; 'and besides, she knew little or nothing of the Prices.'

'I can't excuse her,' said Harry. 'The fact is, Ned, you're too good-natured. It doesn't pay to waste one's kindness on old cats. But I suppose I must go. Good-bye. You won't see me till I come home to dress.' And with these words he lighted his cigar, and walked, or rather ran, out of the house.

Edward Vernon looked after him and shook his head. 'He can't bear Florry Carlton to-day, and yesterday he couldn't abide Lady Sweetapple, and he won't dine with Mrs. Grimalkin because she wasn't kind to the Prices years ago. He's in bad form, poor fellow. The cigar is the only cheering thing about him. But it's no use following him and boring him ; he must have his way.' And then Edward Vernon threw himself into his easy-chair, lighted his cigar, and was soon deep in day-dreams about Alice Carlton.

## CHAPTER LVII.

### HARRY FORTESCUE SITS IN THE PARK.

WHEN Harry Fortescue left Mrs. Boffin's he thought he would just take a turn in Lupus-street, for you must know that No. — was fast becoming holy in his eyes. It contained his divinity, and he worshipped at that shrine. It mattered nothing that Lupus-street was a low unfashionable street, he worshipped all the same ; just as in the early ages men have worshipped misshapen stones or trunks of trees, and thought them all the more divine because they were deformed and monstrous : it was not so much the form or shape as the spirit which they enshrined. And so it was with Harry ; Edith Price lived in Lupus-street, and that fact was quite enough to make Lupus-street, even architecturally, the most beautiful street to his eyes in all London.

'It's not so broad as some other streets,' he said, 'and there are no shops in it ; but then it's easier to see across it and look up at the windows, and a street with shops is always more lively than a street without them.'

He had just come to this conclusion when he reached the greengrocer's shop at the corner ; and there stood Mr. Leek at his door, making his observations on men and things. Now it so happened that Mr. Leek on that morning had some beautiful strawberries in

his window. As soon as Harry Fortescue saw them he was struck by a sudden thought.

‘Those are very fine strawberries,’ he said to Mr. Leek.

‘Yes, sir,’ said Mr. Leek; ‘werry fine strawberries. Will you have a punnet?’

‘I should like to have four punnets,’ said Harry, ‘if you will send them over the way, to No. —.’

‘Four punnets at half-a-crown will be ten shillings in all,’ said Mr. Leek, rubbing his hands. ‘They shall go in directly, sir. A werry nice young lady is Miss Price, sir. Shall I say who sent them?’

‘You may say they are sent to Mrs. Price from a friend,’ said Harry, with a sternness which not a little alarmed Mr. Leek.

‘I beg your pardon, sir; but seein’ you so often in the street, and which it was only on Sunday last I see you walk to church with the young ladies, I made bold to say that Miss Price was a werry nice young lady.’

‘I think it would be better if you were to mind your own business instead of watching your neighbours,’ said Harry, walking off with the consciousness that his movements had been watched.

Mr. Leek looked after him, shaking his head as gravely as Edward Vernon had shaken his.

‘Werry lucky I did not mention Miss Price before he paid for them strawberries, else he mightn’t ’ave ’ad them. Minding one’s own business, indeed! and not watch one’s neighbours! Why, if arter a man ’as minded his own business all the week, he is not to watch his neighbours on Sundays, Hengland would become a land of ’orrid aristocrats, and not a country fit for free men to inhabit. I just wish that respectable young woman who was asking after that gent’s proceedings were to come by now; I’d treat her to a punnet free gratis for nothing, and also tell her something which would astonish her.’

After this patriotic outbreak, Mr. Leek put the half-sovereign which Harry had paid him into the till, sent over the strawberries as was desired, and retreated growling, like a free and bearish Briton, into his back shop.

Harry Fortescue, to tell the truth, was rather scared by the greengrocer’s familiarity, and thought it better to retire from Lupus-street for a season, that he might return with fresh force in the afternoon. He even reckoned the hour when he supposed Mr. Leek would be having his tea, and resolved to call then, that he might not be watched. Now see how provoking it was of Mr. Leek to scare him away; for just after he had fled the street, out came Edith Price, on her way, as we have seen, to Lady Charity. If Harry Fortescue could only have seen her before that interview, much might have happened; and hence observe how little causes—

sometimes so little as a familiar greengrocer—may prevent important results. Of course, Heaven rules everything; but it really sometimes seems as if these little things on which so much turn were left out of consideration. In this instance, at least, much trouble would have been avoided if Mr. Leek had been overruled by Providence. After all, though, this is a sadly worldly view either of greengrocers or Providence. We know better; for just as one sparrow does not fall to earth unheeded, so no greengrocer can step in to trouble our story unless he were permitted to do so for the purpose of trying Harry Fortescue's faith. We do not, therefore, agree in the least with those who think that Providence in these old days of the world is growing short-sighted, and that virtue is not rewarded and vice punished in this wicked nineteenth century as surely as it was in earlier times; for the eyes of Providence never fail, nor shall its vision ever grow dim. If any one acts on the opposite conviction, he will, sooner or later, be convinced in another way.

As it was, Harry Fortescue did not meet Edith Price that morning, but went off into the Park and sat down on a chair. Now, sitting on a chair in the Park is a very different thing at different times of the day. Between ten and eleven you may sit on a chair and see no one sitting, except poor people resting on those free seats which the charity of the First Commissioner of Works has provided for the penniless public. You will sit alone in your grandeur, and watch the gambols of children and tiny things in purple and fine linen, which can only just stand on their little legs. That may be called the nursemaid period of the day. Then, between eleven and twelve, is the young ladies' age, of young girls in hats not yet out, who come there with their governesses and boy-brothers, and walk up and down, very rarely sitting. Then, between twelve and one, the grown people begin to arrive, and the crowd swells and swells, till about half-past one, when it begins to ebb, and the sitters begin to feel that there is such a thing as luncheon. In this latter period, your solitary sitter is no longer solitary. If his chair is well placed under the shade of a tree, its value rises rapidly after half-past twelve. About one, it attracts the longing eyes of fat old ladies and slim young girls. Pursy fathers stop and glare at you, and strong-minded aunts stare at you as though they would convert you into stone, grind you to bits, and hand you over to M'Adam to mend the roads; and all for what?—that they may sit on that chair for half an hour. Some day or other there will be murder committed for a chair on a hot day in the height of the season. There is nothing that so excites the desires of the foot-sore multitude as to see young men sitting at their ease, admiring the horses and horsewomen, while they themselves have to plod on, seeking in vain for something on which to rest, not their feet, but the small of their backs.



Through all these periods as possessor of a chair did Harry Fortescue pass on that memorable Wednesday in June. Alas, on him were wasted the gambols of the children, the first footsteps of the babies, the charms of the young things in hats, the terrors of their governesses, the change in the company, the gradually gathering flood of sitters and walkers, the ease of those who had secured chairs, and the envy of those who had none: fathers and aunts, young men and maidens, members of parliament, peers, horsemen and horsewomen, not to mention horse-breakers, were all lost on him. He stared at everything, and yet he saw nothing, for in each of the pupils of his eyes was fixed the reflection of Edith Price's face; and that is really why lovers are blind, not so much because they cannot see, as because they can see nothing but the beloved object, which, like a cuckoo, has thrown out all other objects from the rest of the vision, and insists upon being seen, and seen alone.

When a man, and especially a young man, is in this unhappy state, it matters little to him how long he sits. Time and space are nothing to him. They were made, as the song says, for 'vulgar slaveys.' A man in love lives only for the object of his affections and for himself. Harry Fortescue began to sit at half-past eleven, and he remained sitting till half-past three. The chairman of the assembly of chairs came up to him several times, and asked him for a fresh penny.

'I have not done my sitting,' said Harry.

'He sits hard—as hard as a turkey hen,' said the chairman to his mate. 'He takes it out, he does. Blest if he won't wear that chair out. If every one sat as him the price must go up to tuppence.'

If the chairman could have quoted Latin, he would have hurled Virgil's '*Sedet æternumque sedebit*' at Harry's head; but fortunately he could not, and so he only mocked at him and jeered at him in the vernacular. But Harry was as Gallio, 'he cared for none of those things.' There he sat thinking on Edith, and the more he sat the more he thought.

However, there is one thing against which even love is not proof, and that is hunger. Love is such an exertion, it so altogether, as the saying is, takes it out of a man or woman—real love, mind you, none of your sham affection—that the body would be ground down by the soul were it not refreshed with food. If a man who is in love tells you he doesn't eat, don't believe him. He must eat if he is in love, or else he could not bear the strain which the heart or the head—for, as is well known, it is a disputed point as to which is the seat of the affections—throws upon the body. Lovers, we know, often fancy they can't eat, or won't eat. That is all a delusion. They deceive themselves, like the wicked and other fools.



We would be bound to tell a man in love by merely glancing at his weekly bills.

As for Harry Fortescue, about half-past three he felt very hungry. So, like an animal seeking its prey, he rose and left his chair. His spirit was willing still to sit idle and think of Edith, but his flesh was weak, and he felt he must eat something. The club was too far off; besides, there was his visit to Edith. Where should he go? To the grill-room at the South Kensington Museum? That, again, was too far. Then there was Gunter's temple of the arts—*venter magister artium* being the only art cultivated, and very well cultivated, there. To Gunter's he accordingly went; and they gave him, on his demand for something to eat, asparagus soup and, we believe, a mutton chop and some patties; and then, feeling still very hungry, he had a Bath bun. That is enough, we hope, to prove how much he must have been in love. Fancy a man having still appetite left for a Bath bun after all that had gone before! Then he had a strawberry ice, and, having washed all this down with a pint of claret, he felt himself at charity with all the world, and much more in love with Edith Price than he had been when he rose from that chair in the Park. If any of you call him greedy, we shall quarrel with you. Harry Fortescue never had been greedy, and was not greedy then. He was in love, and when a man is really in love, if he doesn't get enough to eat he will die before he comes to a declaration. All prudent mothers, therefore, who wish to secure a very eligible young man for their daughters, should take care, if they see him at all hesitating or backward, to ask him often to luncheon and dinner, and see that he is very well fed. Ten chances to one he will then propose. In fact, a lover must be treated just as any other animal. If you wish your hens to lay early, you give them meat. It is a very simple rule, 'Feed a lover, and you will find a husband.' Starve him, and he will not have the heart to propose.

When he left Gunter's, and paid a young lady with close-cropped curls, who had been as good as gold to him, Harry Fortescue would have gone straight to Lupus-street and proposed, but the fear of the greengrocer kept him off.

'That wretch at the corner won't be at his tea yet,' said Harry; so he strolled about, and as he passed through Belgrave-square he saw Amicia drive past. He thought she might have stopped to speak to him; but as it was, she only gave him a quick bow, and dashed on with a wild look of triumph.

Little did he know what was passing in her mind, though, to a certain extent, she had guessed what was passing in his. You must all of you, we think, do justice to the constancy of Amicia, and to the energy and address with which she conceived and carried out her plans. Her heart was set on Harry Fortescue, and she was resolved

to have him if she could. Now she thought she had the game ~~in~~ in her own hands.

'Let him try to take her to church next Sunday,' she said; 'he'll not find it so easy. I wonder if there's a St. Barnabas at Blickling?'

Men in love are often stupid, and Harry was very stupid ~~just~~ just then.

'She means something by that look,' he said. 'But never mind—it will soon all be over. I shall soon be accepted by Edith.'

So he walked on and on in his fool's paradise till it was nearly five o'clock.

'He must be getting his tea now,' he said; and so he walked off to Lupus-street as fast as he could.

## CHAPTER LVIII.

### HARRY FORTESCUE PROPOSES, AND IS REFUSED.

If Harry Fortescue fancied he was going to elude the watchful eye of Mr. Leek, he was much mistaken. The greengrocer had already, as the penny-a-liners say, partaken of tea, and was standing at his own door-step, flourishing like a summer cabbage after that invigorating beverage.

'There he goes, the 'orrid aristocrat,' he said to Mrs. Leek. 'Now he's going to find out how Miss Price liked them British Queens.'

'Is Miss Edith at home?' asked Harry Fortescue, who was now desperate, and ready to defy the greengrocer though he had as many eyes as Argus.

'Yes, sir, she is,' said Betsy, 'and will be down directly. She's just about her packing.'

'About her packing?' thought Harry. 'What can she have to pack about? O, I daresay it's Mary that they are sending off to school.'

So he waited till Edith came down to the dingy back drawing-room with a glow of pleasure on her face.

'O, Mr. Fortescue,' she cried rather than said, 'I am so much obliged to you, and so is mamma.'

'For the strawberries, I suppose?' said Harry. 'They were not much to be obliged for; but I am glad you liked them.'

'Strawberries!' said Edith. 'I never heard of any strawberries, so I can't thank you for them. It is for the situation that I am so grateful. I am sure you must have mentioned me to Lady Charity.'

'Situation! Lady Charity!' exclaimed Harry. 'I know of no situation, and never spoke a word to Lady Charity about you.'

To tell the truth, Edith was as much mortified to hear that Harry had not got her the situation as Harry was at finding that ~~he~~ ~~as~~ ~~or~~ ~~Harry's~~ he had got one. She had made up her mind once for all that he ~~as~~ to be to her a benefactor to whom she was to owe everything. ~~or~~ did she attach to the term any of that odious sense which to ~~Harry's~~ mind it conveyed.

'O, Mr. Fortescue,' she said, 'I am vexed to hear that I am ~~it~~ indebted for this too, as for so much else, to your kindness.'

'And I,' said Harry, 'am more pained than I can tell to hear ~~at~~ you have a hope of obtaining a situation.'

'It is much more than a hope,' said Edith; 'it is the fulfilment of hope, expectation accomplished. I have got a very excellent situation as governess, down in Norfolk. It was offered to me this morning by Lady Charity, and I have accepted it, and I am going down to-morrow morning by the eleven o'clock train from Shoreditch Station.'

Harry Fortescue could scarcely believe what he heard. It was a great blow to him; quite as unexpected as Mr. Blifill's death to that calculating gentleman in *Tom Jones*. He turned pale, and was about as near fainting as Amicia had been when she heard the dreaded name Sonderling in Miss Markham's cottage. As it was, he did not quite faint, but faltered out,

'This is very sudden, Edith. We shall all miss you very much.'

Since she had been a child, Harry Fortescue had never called her Edith, but still Edith's eyes were not yet opened; she had not yet tasted of Love's apple, and still walked in her Eden of innocence, looking upon Harry Fortescue as something divine and infinitely above her. So she answered, as Harry thought, in a very cold way,

'Yes, Mr. Fortescue, I know and feel all that. But, after all, you know it was a separation which must come one day or other. Myamma really bears it better than I could have hoped. And then consider the help I shall be to them. Why, only fancy, I shall have a salary of a hundred a year!'

She said this as if a hundred pounds a year represented all the gold in the treasure-house of Croesus, and was surprised to find Harry still standing, as she thought, apathetically before her, quite unmoved by the astounding intelligence.

'What is a hundred a year?' said Harry, rather stupidly.

'Everything to me,' said Edith proudly, 'though perhaps nothing to you, who are so rich, and have so many friends. At least, it will make me more independent, and remove some of the load of debt which your constant generosity has laid on us.'

'I do not wish it removed,' said Harry. 'If I had my way, I could pay off the debt after a fashion of my own.'

'And what is that fashion?' asked Edith very innocently. 'I

should so like to know.' Thus proving that, if love is blind, so are very often those who are not in love.

'By offering you my hand,' said Harry, very quickly; 'and that as all your debts would be my debts, I should bear the burden of my life long with you.'

Then at last her eyes were opened, and she saw that Harry Fortescue was in love with her.

We are not at all sure that any woman, however young or how old, is displeased at an offer of marriage. We daresay, therefore, that Edith Price was gratified when she heard Harry's declaration. But Edith Price was not at all the woman to be 'gratified' all at once into such affection as is implied by marriage, merely because a young man who had been very kind and generous to her and her father offered her his hand. We believe, in fact, in no such sudden conversions in love. There had been no time to sow the seed even of love. After that operation is over, it will germinate and flourish rapidly enough. Here was Harry Fortescue's affection for Edith Price only four days old, in which space of time it had shot up, as we have said, like a bamboo in the tropics. But if his ardent position could only arrive at a declaration in four days, do you suppose that Edith Price required at least as long, that some time must elapse before she could say that she loved Harry Fortescue? Many people fancy that a handsome young man need only to throw himself before a girl and say, 'I love you with my heart and soul and strength,' and she will accept him on the spot. But this 'love or your life' way is not commonly the way of women. They must be wooed and won. They will not be taken by storm, or carried off, like the Sabine women, by any noble young Roman of any period. It is beneath their dignity, and shocks their self-respect. Even if, before such an offer is made, they have surrendered the outworks to the dangerous enemy, they will retire as far as they are so suddenly and, as it seems to them, so rudely summoned into the keep and citadel of their dignity, and thence defy the enemy till he has made his approaches and advances in due time. Nowadays, at least, few women, just as seldom as fortresses, are taken by storm. And if a young man with the best intentions is brutal or bearish enough to attempt an escalade, a thousand chances to one he will be beaten off and get the worst of it.

So it was with Edith Price. Though gratified, she was shocked and scared. Rather grieved, too, to find her benefactor, whom she had almost deified, descending in this vulgar way from that celestial Olympus to which she had raised him in her imaginations. The step from a god to a lover was, in her eyes, a step from the sublime to the ridiculous. She drew herself, therefore, up to her full height, and said, as though she were an empress, and heiress of a dozen crowns at least,

‘ Mr. Fortescue, I am amazed to hear such silly words from you.’

‘ Do you call the accents of Love silly ?’ said Harry.

‘ The accents of Love are not silly,’ said Edith, ‘ when he has any right to be heard. But you have no such right. Even to utter such accents, situated as we are, with a great gulf between us, which can never be bridged over, is an insult.’

‘ I did not mean to insult you,’ said Harry sadly.

‘ I believe you,’ said Edith ; ‘ but what you said sounded like a mockery and an insult. Why not remain as you are, our benefactor, the great object of our respect and esteem ?’

‘ I cannot remain as I am,’ said Harry. ‘ If I cannot have your love, I will have none of your respect or esteem. “ Benefactor !” what an odious name !’

‘ It is not odious, and shall never be so to me,’ said Edith. ‘ It means “ well-doer.” ’ And then she laid her hand on Harry’s arm, and said softly, ‘ It is better to do well than to do evil, Mr. Fortescue ; and so do not throw me into fresh trouble by offering me something which I feel I can never accept.’

Harry Fortescue was, as you all know, of a very generous nature. He felt that he had been too hasty, and was not the man to hurry any woman’s cattle, least of all those of the girl he fondly loved.

‘ You must forgive me,’ he said. ‘ I fear I was mad to suppose you could accept me all at once.’

‘ Be sane, then,’ said Edith, ‘ and be good, and let me leave London without embittering the few hours which still remain to me with my mother and Mary.’

‘ I will be sane,’ said Harry ; and then he shook Edith by the hand and departed, and she was left alone to continue her packing. There can be no doubt that his affection had shot up wonderfully. It remains to be seen whether that little grain of mustard-seed which had been shaken down from his goodly tree would take root in Edith’s heart, spring up, and overshadow her. Who can tell ? Remember only that a novelist is as a god : with him all things are possible.

‘ There he is again,’ said Mr. Leek, as Harry Fortescue brushed past him in a desperate way ; ‘ he is in a ’urry, he is. Hoff to keep another appintment.’ Then turning to the wife of his bosom, the portly Mrs. Leek, who might have been subdivided into little leeks for the whole principality of Wales on St. David’s day, he said, ‘ The ’abits of the aristycracy is ’orrid, Jemima Anne. When shall we ever ’ave our regulars, and sit in parlymint with our equils ?’

‘ You may vell say ven,’ said Mrs. Leek, whose sympathies were nearly as radical as her husband’s. ‘ Them idlers like that young man are a caddling pack. They ought to dig in the market-gardins round the metropole.’

'Do you think they'd grow good vegetables, Jemima Anne?' said Mr. Leek sententiously.

'I doubt it; but if ve 'ad the power ve'd make 'em try.'

'If they didn't grow good grass,' said Mr. Leek, 'I'd liever grow them myself, if so be I vos to eat 'em.'

From this it will be seen that Mr. Leek's notion of liberty ~~was~~ that the working classes should take the places of their betters, ~~and~~ that while the old masters worked, the old servants should consume the fruit of their toil. But it will be seen that even his advanced politics saw a difficulty. When he feared the upper classes might not grow good asparagus, or, as he called it, 'grass,' he only re-echoed the opinion of the French cook, who, when a similar arrangement was suggested, declared that he could not accept it at all.

'I give my master very good dinners,' he said; 'but I must altogether decline to eat his dinners, he would dress them so badly.'

If any one sees in the story of the French *chef* an additional reason against the communistic reconstruction of society, by which the bees should become drones and the drones bees, they are quite welcome to make all the use they can of it.

While Mr. Leek and his wife were settling the affairs of the nation, Harry Fortescue was striding along towards Mrs. Boffin's house. He saw nothing, heard nothing, and felt nothing except that Edith Price had refused him, and that he had been forced to confess she was quite right.

'I shall always love her,' he said. 'There's no woman in the world like her. As it is, it's all for the best that she should leave town. Perhaps she may not feel happy in Norfolk, and then she will return to town. In the mean time, it must never be known that she has had an offer of marriage. It might do her harm.'

With all that irony of love which even rejected lovers feel, he determined that he would tell no one what had passed; no, not even to Edward Vernon would he reveal a syllable of his attachment for Edith Price. If he found him at Mrs. Boffin's he would astonish him by saying in a casual way, that Edith Price had got a situation, 'and perhaps Edward, poor fellow, he is so deeply in love with Alice Carlton, will think that all this interest I have lately taken in Edith has been with a view to this very situation. Then my secret will be safe.'

When Harry Fortescue reached Mrs. Boffin's, he saw Edward coming along the street. The fact was that Edward had been looking for him all the afternoon, and passed by Gunter's shop in search of him in the Park, while Harry was devouring that very good luncheon. So he had missed him, and, failing in his quest, he had settled himself down in a chair, and sat almost as long as Harry had done in the morning, thinking of Alice Carlton and wondering if he should hear anything about her before he went to Ascot.



‘So glad to see you, Harry,’ said Edward. ‘I was getting anxious about you.’

‘Anxious about what?’ said Harry.

‘You have been very strange these few days, Harry,’ said Edward tenderly, ‘so different; I was afraid you had something on your mind.’

‘I have had something on my mind, but it was a secret, and I could not tell it even to you, Ned. It’s no secret, now. Edith Price has got a very good situation as governess down in Norfolk, and she goes down to it to-morrow.’

‘I am very glad to hear it,’ said Edward as he opened Mrs. Boffin’s door with his latch-key. ‘It will ease her mind to have something to do, and try to support the rest of the family.’

‘I am afraid she will find it very uncongenial work,’ said Harry; that deceitful Harry, who, you see, was already playing off some of those stratagems which are as fair in love as they are in war, only that in war they are against enemies, while in love they are played off on one’s best and truest friends.

‘I don’t see that at all,’ said Edward Vernon. ‘She told me last Sunday she thought she should like nothing so much as teaching.’

‘Perhaps she mayn’t like it when she tries it,’ said Harry.

By this time the two friends had reached Mrs. Boffin’s front drawing-room, and saw some letters on the table.

‘Here is one, I declare, from Lady Carlton,’ said Edward, eagerly clutching it, and tearing it out of the envelope.

‘Don’t be in such a hurry, Ned,’ said Harry sadly. ‘I daresay it’s all right.’

But Edward Vernon paid no heed to him till he had read the letter through, and then he turned to Harry and asked,

‘Did you say anything, Harry?’

‘I said I supposed it would be all right,’ said Harry.

‘It is all right,’ said Edward; ‘I knew it would be. Lady Carlton only reminds us that Lord Pennyroyal has asked Florry and Alice to Ascot, and that Lady Pennyroyal—the darling woman!—hopes we will both go to Ouzelmere to luncheon between the races on Tuesday.’

‘Ouzelmere!’ said Harry vaguely; ‘what’s Ouzelmere?’

‘Why, silly,’ said Edward, ‘that’s of course the name of the house which the Pennyroyals have taken for the race week.’

‘O,’ said Harry, ‘I see;’ his heart being back in Lupus-street already.

‘This is really delightful,’ said Edward. ‘What fun we shall have!’

‘What’s delightful?’ said Harry.

‘Why, going to Ascot, of course,’ said Edward. ‘Only fancy, we shall meet Florry and Alice.’

‘Not to mention old Pennyroyal,’ said Harry. ‘However, ~~the~~ the same, I daresay it will be very nice—for those that like it.’

‘And won’t you like it, Harry?’ said Edward.

‘I don’t know,’ said Harry, knowing well enough all the ~~time~~ that he would not like it at all. ‘You must recollect that we ~~are~~ not going to stay with the Pennyroyals, but with Lady Charity ~~and~~ Lady Sweetapple at Heath Lodge.’

‘Very true,’ said Edward; ‘but then, you know, we shall see a great deal of Florry and Alice.’

‘I don’t know that we shall,’ said Harry. ‘Races are such a perpetual bustle and hurry.’

‘At any rate we shall go to luncheon on Tuesday with the Pennyroyals,’ said Edward. ‘Here, you see, is the invitation.’

‘Who can tell?’ said Harry dreamily. ‘You see we can’t leave the ladies with whom we are staying to go off to luncheon with other people; it wouldn’t be polite.’

‘Harry,’ said Edward, ‘you’re enough to provoke a saint with your “I don’t knows” and “who can tells.” I do know, and I can tell very well that we shall go to luncheon with the Pennyroyals on Tuesday. Of course they will ask the ladies to go with us.’

‘That’s not very like old Pennyroyal,’ said Harry. ‘He will be afraid of being eaten out of house and home.’ Then brightening up all at once, he said, ‘Come, Ned, I’ll bet you a crown that we have a cold leg of mutton for luncheon at Ouzelmere.’

‘A boiled leg?’ said Edward.

‘No,’ said Harry, ‘I’ll not bet that; it would be too horrid. I say a leg of mutton.’

‘Done,’ said Edward; ‘and now you are more like your old form, let us go and dress for dinner at Mrs. Grimalkin’s.’

## CHAPTER LIX.

### HOW THEY ALL SPENT THE TIME BEFORE ASCOT.

WE are not about to dwell on that dinner at Mrs. Grimalkin’s. Harry and Edward went and came away. It was like most of Mrs. Grimalkin’s dinners, neither very good nor very bad. Harry Fortescue thought most of the company bores; but then, you know, he was not exactly in a state of mind to be a good judge. Edward afterwards said it was amusing; and on going away he told Mrs. Grimalkin that he had enjoyed himself very much. But then Edward was ready to look at all things in a rosy light after that letter from Lady Carlton.

The reader will probably not be disappointed at hearing nothing more of Mrs. Grimalkin’s dinner. We have all of us in our lives, be they long or short, had more than enough of the great house of Tabbi-cat. Perhaps he will be more sorry not to hear anything of Edith

Price's departure for Norfolk. After that interview Harry Fortescue could not venture to call at No. — Lupus-street; and, in fact, we should know little as to how poor Edith parted from Mary and her mother, were it not that Lady Charity was so anxious to see the new governess packed off safely to the station, that she sent her maid to take her to Shoreditch; and along with her went Mrs. Crump, who, when she came back, told her mistress that the 'poor thing' lived in a wretched lodging, and that Mrs. Nicholson told her poor Mrs. Price was took ill at the notion of Miss Edith's going. 'She can't bear it,' she said, 'for Miss Edith is the life of the family.'

'But she went all the same, Crump, I hope?' said Amicia.

'O yes, my lady; Mrs. Frazer—that's Lady Charity's maid—and me went with her in a cab to the station, and took her ticket, and put her into the train, and told the guard—a very handsome young man with black whiskers, my lady—to look after her; and then she bowed to us and thanked us out of the window, like a real lady, and the train started, and we saw no more of her.'

'Then she has gone, Crump?' said Lady Sweetapple, with a sigh of relief.

'Yes, my lady, gone, and 'alfway to Norwich by this time.'

This is all we shall tell you about Edith's journey. Nor shall we say much about what happened on the remaining days of the week. There lay the seeds of hope and hate in all those lovers' hearts, growing and springing in various ways, till they all went down to Ascot on Monday. If we say that Harry and Edward were as lazy as usual we shall not be far wrong. They were both lost in the idleness of love, and passed the days in dreaming of Alice and Edith. Amicia and Lady Charity were full of preparations for the races; and it was not the fault of the former if she were not gorgeously arrayed at Ascot. Harry went to see her on the Saturday, the 11th of June, but he took Edward Vernon with him as a protection. They found Mrs. Grimalkin there; so there could be no scandal as to their visit. The same day they met Count Pantouffles walking along Piccadilly. He bowed his very best to them, and hoped he might see them at the races. After that they went into the Row, and there they saw, sitting side by side, the gallant Colonel Barker and his faithful wife. When they asked him if he were going to Ascot, he replied he would not go there for a great deal; Mrs. Barker hated races, and so he never went to them. You see what a good and faithful husband Colonel Barker was, and what a warning he is to all men always to do what their wives wish.

'The Marjorams will be there though, Jerry,' said Mrs. Barker; 'for Mrs. Marjoram told me the other day that Lady Pennyroyal insisted on their staying for the week at Ouzelmere.'

'I don't like Mrs. Marjoram,' said Harry; 'but I think old Marjoram a splendid fellow.'

‘He has a good deal to bear,’ said Mrs. Barker; ‘but for that he’s very fond of Mrs. Marjoram.’

‘So was Job of his first wife,’ said Harry.

‘O, Mr. Fortescue, don’t be so spiteful,’ said Mrs. Barker. Whereat the Colonel laughed.

‘Jerry dear,’ said Mrs. Barker, ‘we must get home to dinner, or the fish will be spoilt.’

‘By all means let us go, my dear,’ said Colonel Barker.

And so, though it was only a little after five, the constant couple waddled off like a pair of ducks across the Park to Tyburnia.

‘There they go, Harry,’ said Edward—‘the most loving pair in England.’

‘Yes,’ said Harry in a melancholy voice. ‘When you are married to Alice Carlton, mind you are always as good to her as Colonel Barker is to his wife.’

‘And you, when you are married to Florry—’

But before Edward could end his sentence Harry stopped him.

‘Don’t deceive yourself, Ned; I shall never be married to Florry Carlton.’

‘Faint heart never won fair lady,’ said Edward, who still went on in his stupid way, fancying that, because Florry was in love with Harry, Harry must be in love with her.

‘My heart is not faint,’ said Harry, ‘and I do not mean to try to win her.’

‘I don’t believe you,’ said Edward.

So they went on at cross purposes; and when they had sat long enough, they went and dined at the club. They had now got so much in the way of going to bed early that Mrs. Boffin ceased to wonder at it. So that they did not rise early it did not matter; but to go to bed early and to rise early was, she said, as bad as burning the candle at both ends.

We forgot to say that Edward Vernon answered Lady Carlton’s letter as soon as he received it; and in his reply he said that nothing would give him and Harry Fortescue greater pleasure than to see the young ladies again. It would not be their fault if they did not come to luncheon at Ouzelmere on Tuesday, but they were to a certain extent dependent on the movements of Lady Charity, with whom they would be staying for the race-week.

When Lady Carlton communicated the contents of this epistle to her daughters, Alice Carlton thought it all that could be wished, but Florry was not nearly so well satisfied. What she said to her mother was, ‘I call that a very cold letter, mamma;’ but when she got up to the schoolroom with Alice, she was much less measured in her language.

‘How can you say you are pleased, Alice, with such a letter? Why, Harry Fortescue’s name is only mentioned once in it!’

'Darling Florry,' said Alice, 'why complain? Edward's name not mentioned at all till the signature at the very end.'

'Yes; but then he wrote it himself,' said Florry. 'Of course, Edward could not speak about himself, but he might have said a little more of Harry; and Harry,' she added sorrowfully, 'might have sent me a message.'

'How could he send you a message, Florry? You know it would not have been right. Young men don't send messages to young ladies; it's not proper.'

'I know it is not,' said Florry, 'but I daresay widows do. I wonder, now, how many times that nasty woman has seen Harry Fortescue since she has been in town.'

'Now do not be so jealous, Florry,' said Alice. 'How do you know he has seen her at all?'

'I am sure he has,' said Florry. 'Not that he's at all likely to marry her; he has far too good taste. And then, there's that Edith Price. Between the two, I can't rest at night.'

'Why don't you trust in Harry as I trust in Edward?' said Alice.

'Because it's not in my nature,' said Florry, 'and because Harry Fortescue is far less easy to manage than Edward Vernon.'

'He is, indeed, and I am glad of it,' said Alice. 'But keep up your spirits, darling, and rely on seeing him at Ascot.'

So the sisters consoled each other upstairs, while Sir Thomas and Lady Carlton discussed the affair downstairs, and by Sunday morning had quite made up their minds that one daughter should marry Harry Fortescue and the other Edward, if these young men would only behave properly, and ask prettily for them at Ascot.

That Sunday, the 12th of June 1870, was one of longing and desire for all the characters in our book. When Amicia woke up, the first thing she thought of was, 'One day more, and then I shall see him at Ascot. I have banished Edith Price from London, and for Florry Carlton, I defy her. He must and shall be mine!'

Harry Fortescue when he woke said, 'One day more to Ascot, and then the horrid week will be soon over. I wonder how my dear girl—' he had actually the audacity to call the girl who had rejected him 'my'—'gets on with the Blicklings, and how long it will be before I see her again.'

Edward Vernon was intent on Alice, saying little and thinking much. After breakfast he said, 'Shall we go to St. Barnabas', Harry?'

'Of course we will,' said Harry; 'I wouldn't miss going there for anything.'

And when they set out, if Edward Vernon had not all the eyes in his heart turned on High Beech, he might have seen how cunningly Harry Fortescue walked through the very same streets to St.

Barnabas', and even tried to put his feet on the very flagstones on which Edith had walked the Sunday before. It was very silly, but very natural for a young man in love. The very dust beneath her feet was life to him. In the church he sat on the same seat as he had filled the Sunday before, and all through the service he stared at the seat where Edith had sat. It mattered nothing that it was now filled with a fat old lady, as like to Edith as a turtle is to a turtle-dove; but was it not the same seat—the shrine which his divinity had visited? All this passed under Edward's eyes, yet he never noticed it. He, too, was in love, and reft of outward sense. Florry and Alice walked twice to church, side by side, talking and thinking of Harry and Edward; and when afternoon church was over, they went down to the river and looked at the kingfisher, still hard at work to feed himself and his young. But the only pleasure they took in him or his bright plumage and unerring eye was, that it was the same kingfisher on which Harry and Edward had looked. It was so nice to look at him and think of those absent ones. And so the weary sultry Sunday passed away, and night came, and dew fell, and the lovers in town and country thought of those that were not with them, but whom they were soon to meet. All but poor Harry, who went on resolutely loving Edith Price, and his love increasing in stature and in Harry's favour every hour, and refusing to listen to the seductions of Amicia or the constancy of Florry Carlton.

'I am quite ready, dear Lady Charity,' said Amicia, as they came back from St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, that Sunday afternoon. 'My new dresses are charming, and if it doesn't rain at Ascot my triumph will be complete.'

'You deserve to win, you are so confident,' said Lady Charity. 'I am sure I wish you all success.'

'I am sure I shall succeed,' said Amicia, as she went in at No. — Lowndes-street.

'Now, Mr. Marjoram,' said Mrs. Marjoram, after family prayers on Sunday, 'there is one thing that I especially desire. Do not let me see you flirting with any of the ladies we may meet at Ascot. Races, you know, are my aversion, and I only go there under a protest to please you and Lady Pennyroyal. But you will add much to the disgust with which I go to this profane and worldly gathering of the priests of Baal if you indulge in any of your usual exhibitions of bad taste. I never go out with you that you do not cover me with disgrace, and I desire that on this occasion I may be spared the repetition of any such indignities.'

'But, my dear,' said the much-enduring Marjoram, 'when did you ever see me flirt with any one? And as for going to Ascot to please me, I declare I thought I was going to please you. I know I can only do so with great inconvenience in my business.'



'Mr. Marjoram,' said Mrs. Marjoram, 'pray spare me these painful altercations. You say you never flirt. Let the recollection of Miss Markham and my outraged feelings suffice to stop your mouth. As for going to Ascot, I can only repeat that I go there to please you. With my blighted heart and blasted affections, I really do not know whither I go on earth.'

'My dear,' said Mr. Marjoram, 'pray calm your feelings. You will injure your health.'

'Cease your remonstrances,' said the remorseless Mrs. Marjoram; 'they are wasted on me. The heart knoweth its own bitterness.'

'Yes,' said Mr. Marjoram, driven to desperation, 'and the ass knows his master's crib.' And then, in some fear lest Mrs. Marjoram would go off into hysterics at his piecing together, or what she would call his 'interpolation of Holy Writ,' he seized his bedroom-dilectick, and ran upstairs to bed.

Mrs. Marjoram looked after him for a moment or two in amazement.

'What can he have been doing?' she cried. 'Has he been smoking another cigar, or has that wicked designing woman, Miss Markham, been writing him letters behind my back?'

Saying which she too ran off to bed; and all we can say is, that Mr. Marjoram did not catch it after Mrs. Marjoram went up to bed, the servants next morning belied their mistress when they met her at breakfast, and had a good gossip before morning prayers.

## CHAPTER LX.

### HOW HARRY AND EDWARD WENT TO ASCOT.

At last the wished-for morrow. Harry and Edward were to meet Miss Charity and Amicia at the Waterloo Station. They were to go down to Heath Lodge by the 2.5 train, so that they might settle themselves at Ascot in the afternoon in good time for the races on Wednesday. Edward Vernon was all impatience, and tried to get away to the station a quarter of an hour before their time. But Harry dawdled and lingered, and, if he could have had his way, would have run off to admire Lupus-street once more before he started; he even wanted to drive to the Vauxhall Station, because they would have to cross Lupus-street, but Edward would not hear of it. At last, however, they reached the Waterloo Station, where the clock of St. Sapphira's church pointed at ten minutes to nine, as it has invariably pointed for the last ten years. They had only five minutes to spare when they took their tickets, and on the platform they found the ladies and their maids anxiously expecting them.

'I thought you were never coming,' said Amicia reproachfully to Harry.

'In this world one ought never to hurry oneself or others,' said Harry.

'We had better take our seats,' said Edward, 'or we shall be left behind after all.'

So they took their seats, and had the carriage to themselves all the way down. Whether this freedom from strangers with forward manners was due to want of traffic or to half-a-crown which Harry had given to the guard, we decline to say.

The trains to Ascot, it is matter of railway history, are not fast. They are not at all like some of the young ladies of the present day, 'velocious,' as we have heard a Yankee say. And here we may remark that, as a general rule, life would be much more tolerable, at least for fathers, if the trains were faster and the daughters slower in this generation. But the trains to Ascot are not fast. They are virtuous, respectable locomotives, doing their twenty miles an hour with extreme regularity. Even if they sometimes dash off as far as Staines at something like speed, they lose it all again before you get to Ascot; for after Staines the train becomes a regular crawler. They are all drawn by engines called the Sloth, or the Snail, or the Tortoise. They stop five minutes at every station; and if any station were left out or passed by, it would raise such a question of precedence between it and all the other stations as would last for years before it was settled.

So the 2.5 train, which bore Amicia and her followers to Ascot, crawled and crept along for about an hour and a half and then it stopped at Ascot Station. The good Lady Charit had sent her carriage down on Saturday, and there it was waiting for them at the station, which, for a week once in the year is converted from one of the quietest into the busiest station in England.

'How far is it to Heath Lodge?' asked Amicia of the postmaster.

'About half a mile up the hill,' was the reply.

Then, leaving the maids and footmen to look after their baggage they drove off for Heath Lodge.

You all of you, of course, remember how hot it was at Ascot races of 1870: and certainly as they drove up the hill the sun beat down on them with tropical heat.

'How dusty the roads are!' said Edward, as if it was at all likely they could be anything else after the last year's drought.

'They'll be much more cut up to-morrow and Thursday,' said Harry, looking idly down on the gravelly ride.

As her companions were so dull, Amicia thought it lucky that Heath Lodge was only half a mile from the station. It was late

an half a mile in reality ; and as soon as the horses had breasted the hill, they were not long in reaching the house.

‘I wonder what the house is like,’ said Lady Charity ; ‘I only took it by description. Perhaps it will turn out to be like buying a pig in a poke.’

‘I think,’ said Harry, brightening up, ‘it can’t be so bad as that. If I recollect, there was no pig, after all, in the poke. There must be a house called Heath Lodge, at any rate.’

‘We shall soon see,’ said Amicia, as they drove through the lodge-gate.

Of course you will say that if there is a lodge, and a very pretty one as this was, there must be a house to correspond. But if you say this, you may be quite wrong. A pretty lodge may be only a bait thrown out to tempt people to look at, and perhaps to take, a bad house. Nay, is there not the sad case of that Irish peer who spent eighty thousand pounds on his lodge and his gate, and never got so far as building his house at all ? He was ruined before he got to his house ; and when he died he left his demesne, as they call it in Ireland, with a magnificent lodge and gate, and no house.

Well, but what sort of a house was Heath Lodge ? It was a mere apology for a house, and it would have been hard to say which it most resembled, a lean-to, a barn, or a shed. It had a beautiful lodge and two entrances, good stables ; and a magnificent position on the ridge, overlooking the wild heath for miles and miles. Like madmen and fools it only lacked one thing, and that thing was itself. It was a charity to call it a house ; and, though charity covers a deal of sin, it was hard even for charity to call Heath Lodge a house.

‘How lovely !’ said Amicia, as the carriage drove through the stately trees, and she inhaled the balmy fragrance of the firs. ‘How lovely !’ and then before the words were well out of her mouth, the carriage stopped at what charity also called the hall-door.

Heath Lodge was a long low erection, pierced with apertures here and there called windows, one of which was dignified as the hall-door, and cut down to the ground. When you got inside, you saw the hall was no hall at all, but only a slice of the erection cut off in the middle. On either side of this slice you entered into other slices, and out of them again into other slices all of the same size. When the erection turned the corner at each end, and there was another slice tacked on as a return, thus making two little wings. Behind in the centre was a glass shed over what was called a kitchen, and from the hall led a steep, ladder-like, straight, narrow staircase to the bedrooms above, which were all arranged on the same plan as the slices below. Over these bedrooms was the roof ; and it was very lucky there was nothing more, because the erection would have certainly got top-heavy and tumbled down.

The feature of Heath Lodge was the verandah, which ran round

the front and the wings, and we verily believe kept the whole erect upright. If Heath Lodge had not had that surgical bandage must have fallen down, it was such a cripple. When we add that like so many of our noble abbeys, it had no foundations; that there were no cellars, and the wine was hidden, like the early Christians in holes and corners of the house; that there was a smell of decay as soon as the windows were closed; and that, as you lay in bed on the lovely June morning, you could see the sun shining down the short broad chimney, you will perceive that, after all, hiring Heath Lodge even for a week was rather like buying a pig in a poke.

Amicia and her friends had not been five minutes in Heath Lodge before they had run over all the ground-floor. Then she and Lady Charity went up the ladder to see what the bedrooms were like. When Harry was left with Edward, the latter said,

‘What a charming house out of doors, Harry, and what a dog-hole inside!’

‘That’s because you don’t understand architecture, Ned. I can tell you all about it. Heath Lodge was built by a sporting admiral in George IV.’s time—not our dear old handicapping admiral, but a real old salt. So when he came to build this “box,” as he called it, he planned it on the model of his old ship the *Renown*, a fine old two-decker of those days; and if he could have had his way he would have had as many windows in his house as the old ship had guns, but as he could not have so many, he built on what Mr Sheepskin calls the *cy-pres* principle. Don’t you see all the rooms are cabins; the kitchen is the cockpit; we are now on the main-deck and that ladder reaches up to the spar-deck and the quarter-deck. These windows at each end are for his stern-chasers and bow-chasers. When he got out on the roof and surveyed the country he felt himself on his quarter-deck with his glass in his hand.’

This was such a long speech for Harry now to make, that Edward Vernon looked on it as a sign of returning animation.

‘All very true, Harry,’ he said; ‘but what’s the verandah like?’

‘How silly you are!’ said Harry. ‘Don’t you see that when the gallant admiral built Heath Lodge, he fancied that he had brought the *Renown* into port, and so he threw this verandah round her to show that she was in dry dock.’

‘O, I see,’ said Edward; and after this short lucid interval they both relapsed into love, and began to think of Edith and Alice.

As soon as Lady Sweetapple and Lady Charity had mounted the ladder, they were followed by Lady Charity’s cook, who wanted them to come down at once and look at ‘her’ kitchen.

‘Never a hot-plate nor a gas-stove, my lady. Nothing to cook with; and such a draught! One might as well cook out of doors

'No great hardship in this lovely weather,' said her mistress. 'You must make the best of it, Mrs. Cullender. It's only for a week, you know. We must live as we can, and not be particular.'

So Mrs. Cullender was dispatched down the ladder quicker than she came, and next it was the turn of the maids.

'O, my lady,' cried Mrs. Crump, 'never a drop of 'ot water laid on and not so much cold water either, in the whole 'ouse.'

'Just as I thought would be the case,' said Amicia coldly. 'You will have to work hard, Crump, for this week at least. Who wants hot water in this weather? Take some of the cold out, and let it stand in the sun—it will soon get warm. This week we must all rough it.'

'Rough it, indeed, my lady!' persisted Mrs. Crump. 'We shall all cry out rough it when the 'ard water turns all our complexions into goose-skins.'

'Don't be a goose yourself, Crump,' said Amicia. 'Go away and make the best of it.'

Amicia was determined not to be put out by these small troubles.

Then there was a great consultation as to how the berths in the cabins upstairs were to be filled. At last it was settled that Harry and Edward should have the two sternmost cabins, and Amicia and Lady Charity those in the bow of the *Renown*. In the waist of the ship Mrs. Crump and Mrs. Frazer were placed, and in rooms on either side of them came the other maids. What became of the men-servants no one knew. They were all under the leadership of Lady Charity's old butler, who had been with her many years—a man who never made a complaint, thought nothing domestic beneath his care, and would have found a roof over your head, ay, and beds under it besides, even in the deserts of Arabia. He never interfered with the maids, he said. 'Maids were like fillies'—he was, as you see, rather of a sporting turn—'so uncertain, it was never safe to speculate on what they might do. Mrs. Frazer or my lady might manage them.' But for the men he could answer, and he did answer for them at Heath Lodge. There they always were, respectful and attentive. Whether they slept up trees like gorillas, or underground like field-mice and moles, no one could tell. Perhaps they slept in a tent, perhaps they never went to bed at all. There they were by day; at bed-time they vanished, only to return next morning at breakfast. A good butler, like a great general, is never so truly good and great as in such a house as Heath Lodge at Ascot races.

'You will see,' said Lady Charity to Amicia, as they climbed down the ladder, holding by the hand-rail, 'we shall be very comfortable here.'

'But shall I be happy?' said Amicia.

‘Of course you will, my dear, of course you will. And now let us look after our young men.’

‘They can’t be far off,’ said Amicia. But they were nowhere to be found in the house.

‘It’s rather stuffy here,’ said Harry to Edward, while the ladies were upstairs; ‘let us get out into the open air, and sit under a tree and have a weed.’

‘Just what I think,’ said Edward. ‘That just suits my complaint.’

So they went out and looked down across the low ground near the Ascot Station, away over wide heather towards the Hampshire hills. I am not sure that they did not see the Hind’s Head.

Nor was it long before the ladies joined them; and then they walked about the beautiful grounds and admired the site.

‘What a splendid position for a house!’ said Harry.

‘Yes,’ said Amicia, ‘and with such a house on it! Heath Lodge does not remind me of what Gustavus Adolphus said of the Munich of his day, that it was a golden saddle on a donkey’s back, for it is a donkey’s pannier on a thoroughbred horse.’

‘Pray don’t talk of thoroughbred horses till to-morrow; we shall have quite enough of them when the races begin,’ said Harry with great brutality. ‘But it is a wretched house.’

‘What shall we do?’ said Lady Charity, changing the conversation. ‘O, I know. We will wait till the sun has gone down a little, and then we’ll take a drive in the cool of the evening to Swinley, and come back and dine at nine.’

‘That will be charming,’ said Amicia; ‘and then we can have a nice walk under the old oaks at Swinley.’

‘Anything you like,’ said Lady Charity. ‘We are here to enjoy ourselves, you know.’

‘I am quite ready,’ said Harry. ‘Anything for a quiet life. I am willing to sit here or to go there. Don’t you think it delightful to sit under the shade of this tulip-tree and think of nothing?’

Thinking of nothing, the story-teller, when his heart was far away, among the fens and ‘broads’ of Norfolk, near that prosaic King’s Lynn.

‘We might take a little turn about these grounds first,’ said Amicia. ‘It will be all under the shade. Come along.’

The young men rose, and the four walked slowly down the brow of the hill, through winding walks cut through chestnut and birch and Scotch fir, and as they went they admired the choice trees and plants which the worthy admiral had planted.

‘There’s an Araucaria,’ cried Lady Charity, in delight, ‘that rivals the one at Dropmore! It must be forty feet high. And do just look at those Deodaras and Wellingtonias. They’re younger trees, for they were not introduced so soon; but they are noble



trees, especially that pair of Wellingtonias on the lawn. Did you ever see such stout sturdy trees ?'

Dear Lady Charity was an enthusiast on trees, and she would have run on through all the varieties of Pinus and Abies. Her conversation would have been a perfect wood of Douglas and Nobilis and Pinsapos. In fact, it would have become so thick of Cryptomerias and Thujas and cypresses, that, as Mr. Sonderling would have said, you could not see the wood for the trees. But Amicia, as you well know, had not proposed to stroll through the grounds to listen to a lecture on arboriculture from Lady Charity. Without replying, therefore, and responding to her friend's rapture, she let Mr. Edward Vernon walk on, while she fell back with Harry Fortescue. Perhaps, if Harry had been less in love with Edith Price, he would have run away ; but his rejection had made him desperate ; he did not care much what befell him, so that he was allowed to worship his divinity in his own way. He remained, therefore, like a lamb led by a string ; and all the while Amicia thought that her hour was come, and that at last she was leading Harry Fortescue about as she pleased.

'It is a pity he is so shy,' she said to herself. 'I must try to rouse him.' Then she said out loud,

'You do not seem happy, Mr. Fortescue.' She would have called him 'Harry' if she had dared, but she did not dare.

'I am not happy,' said Harry shortly.

'I am so sorry for that,' she said. 'Can I do anything to make you happier, Mr. Fortescue ?'

'I am afraid not,' said Harry.

'Why are you afraid ?' said Amicia, as impetuously as Florry Carlton might have answered, for she fancied now was her time, before Florry arrived on the scene. As for Edith Price, she had disposed of her for ever, she thought ; added to which, she always fell back on the reflection, 'He has too much taste to marry a governess, however good-looking she may be.'

'I am afraid of everything,' said Harry ; 'of you, and,' he added, 'of the whole world.'

'That is very silly, Mr. Fortescue,' said Amicia. 'Why be afraid of me, who am so little, and of the whole world, which is so great ? Will you take my advice if I give it ?'

'I can't take any advice till I hear what it is,' said Harry, with a caution which would have done credit to Prometheus himself.

'Would you like to hear it ?'

'Yes,' said Harry.

'It is this,' said Amicia, in her sweetest of all sweet voices : 'Make your choice like a man, once for all. Be afraid of the whole world, but do not be afraid of me. You see,' she said, sinking her

voice almost to a whisper, 'I wish you to make your choice between me and all the world, and to give the preference to me.'

'I have no choice to make,' said Harry sadly; 'I do not know my own mind.'

'Then why not let one who knows you so well as I do make it for you? You can trust me.'

'I know not whom to trust,' said Harry in a still more melancholy manner.

Amicia was just going to say, 'Then pray trust in me as I trust in you,' when they turned a little in the road, and came upon that provoking pair in front, who had got tired, and had sat down on a bench.

Had Amicia been a female tyrant, a Semiramis, a Tomyris, or Athaliah, of the olden time, she would have killed Lady Charity and Edward Vernon on the spot for thwarting her wishes. She would have killed them both for spite, and then for love have erected a splendid monument to their memory. What right had they to sit there, just at that most critical moment of her destiny? She had, in her own imagination, nearly brought her horse to the water, and more than that, he was just about to drink, and here they stood in the way, not like angels, but fiends, and troubled the water, and he was scared and would not drink. But as she was not a fine old female tyrant, and as her desires were bridled by laws and civilisation, and especially by want of power to work her will, she had to bear it, and to pout and say,

'Why, I thought you had been half a mile farther on, admiring the trees.'

'We thought we could admire them as well sitting as standing,' said Edward; 'and so, as Lady Charity felt tired, I proposed to her to sit down. It was all my fault.'

After that they climbed up the hill again, and Amicia went up the steep ladder, as soon as they reentered the house, without uttering another word, she was so put out. She threw herself into a chair, and burst into tears.

'How unfortunate it was, and how stupid of them to sit there! It was not at all right.'

'Right!' As if a woman ought to speak of rights, who had so accepted the modern mode of thinking about women and what they may do or not do, as to make what was the next thing to an offer, if it were not actually an offer, to a backward young man, of whom she was particularly fond. But then Amicia was a widow.



del.

Edmond Evans, sc.

LADY SWRETAPPLE'S WISHES THWARTED



## CHAPTER LXI.

## HOW THEY DROVE TO SWINLEY AND MET THE PENNYROYALS.

WHILE all this was happening at Ascot, Lord and Lady Pennyroyal were slowly making their way across country to Ascot from Farthinghoe Castle. Florry and Alice Carlton had driven over in the morning from High Beech, and, after luncheon, the whole party started for Ouzelmere. We have not told you where High Beech is, and we do not mean to tell you. It's a shocking thing to lay out the abodes as well as the hearts of men and women. No doubt, when this book is as famous as it deserves to be, tourists from the manufacturing districts, as well as our Transatlantic cousins, will make many a journey from London to see where the Carltons and the Pennyroyals lived. You will find more manufacturers looking for High Beech, and more Americans seeking for Farthinghoe Castle; for the men of Manchester are, as is well known, no tuft-hunters, whereas most Americans fall down and worship a real live tree for the very novelty of the thing. But, so far as we are concerned, the privacy of the houses of Marjoram and Carlton shall be respected. Nothing shall induce us to reveal exactly where their estates lie.

You must be content, therefore, to know that both places were somewhere in Surrey, and that from Farthinghoe Castle you had to go across country to Ascot.

In that weather it was not very easy work for the horses, though the distance was not more than twenty miles, and a pair of horses had been sent on to change half-way. On came the Pennyroyal carriage, with its four insides and its footman and coachman on the box, at the rate of seven miles an hour, by Sandhurst, all through the balmy, breezy, heathy country round Bagshot. The ladies were full of delight at the beauty of the fir woods and the picturesque scenery of the country; and when they reached Swinley, and its oaks and beeches and limes and firs, at half-past seven, they were absolutely enchanted, as Lady Pennyroyal said.

Even Lord Pennyroyal enjoyed it in his way. As an agriculturist he was not very fond of heath and Bagshot sand; he very much doubted whether his new hobby, Silesian sugar-beet, would thrive on such soil. The firs and ferns and heather were wasted on him; his nostrils did not rejoice in the fragrance of the pine woods. But when they reached Swinley, where a great pocket of clay crops out on the edge of the Bagshot sand, he too was delighted; but not as the ladies, and his joy was not pure as theirs, but mingled with regret.

'O!' he said; 'where such big trees grow, the soil must be good. There's clay here, I'll bet a penny.'

You see he was ready to stake two out of the four syllables which formed his name to back his opinion. What can a man stake more than half his name? It was like the kings of old offering half of their kingdom to the man who could save their daughters from the dragon ; and yet, in Lord Pennyroyal's case, it was only a penny.

'Yes,' he said, 'there's clay, and good clay, here, I'll bet a penny.'

Then, as no one accepted the bet, he proceeded with his regrets.

'What a waste of fine soil in keeping up these rotten old oaks ! I'd cut them all down if they were mine, sell the bark, grub up the roots for firewood, plough up the land, and sow it with sugar-beet. What a crop it would bear !'

Rotten old oaks, indeed ! This was the irreverent way in which he spoke of those giants of the forest, those fine gouty old fellows who stood all around him, as venerable as our grandfathers with their poor old feet swathed in flannel and limping about in list shoes. They were trees, every one of which was an aristocrat of the forest. They had stood there long before the Conquest. And yet here was a peer, who represented a family of the same date, proposing to cut them down and supply their place with Silesian sugar-beet !

'I would do nothing of the sort,' said Lady Pennyroyal. 'I would leave it all just as it is. Nothing can be more beautiful than these oaks and beeches and firs and ferns and thorns.'

'So would I, and I,' said Florry and Alice in one breath.

'It is calculated,' said Lord Pennyroyal, 'that there are many thousands of acres of waste land in England. Fancy what they would produce if they were all broken up and sold and sown with sugar-beet !'

'I wouldn't sacrifice these oaks for all the sugar in the world,' said Florry.

'I hope, if it produced anything, it would produce a revolution,' said Alice, 'against the government that were such a set of Goths.'

'There's the New Forest—' said Lord Pennyroyal.

'And I hope it will continue,' said Lady Pennyroyal.

'It is always impossible to argue with women,' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'They are utterly ignorant of political economy.'

'Long may they remain so !' said Florry Carlton. 'In this respect may they continue as wild and uncultivated as Bagshot Heath, Swinley Park, or the New Forest !'

'And these rabbits,' said Lord Pennyroyal—'look at the number of these pests of the farmer.' And as he said this, he pointed with his stick at the swarms of his enemies, which frisked and bobbed about in all directions.

'Pretty little creatures,' said Lady Pennyroyal, 'how much they



**add** to the charm of the landscape! a rabbit is such a really wild **animal.**'

'There they go, there they go!' cried Alice, laughing in glee to **see** them scuttle about on all sides.

It was very fortunate for those three ladies that Lord Pennyroyal **never** swore; he was far too well bred to do such a thing. But if **he** had ever sworn, it would have been then at his hereditary enemy **the** 'irrepressible' rabbit, as he has been rightly called. But though **he** felt it beneath him to swear, it was his bounden duty to protest **as** solemnly as possible against the common foe.

'Rabbits,' he said, with great severity—'rabbits will be the ruin **of** this favoured land. It should be the first duty of the government **to** extirpate them. There should be public coney-catchers, whose **sole** business, or rather duty, it should be to exterminate them. If **it** were necessary, I would suppress the Master of the Buckhounds **and** establish a new dignity, "The Queen's Own Coney-catcher." **He** should wear a mantle of rabbit-skin, and—'

'Be free of every burrow in the kingdom,' said Florry, interrupt-  
**ing** him.

'My dear Miss Carlton,' said Lord Pennyroyal, 'don't jest on **such** a serious subject. Think of all the swedes, and mangold, and **corn**, and grass, not to mention this new source of industry, Silesian **sugar-beet**, which these little wretches have destroyed and will **destroy**. Whole families have been ruined by their ravages, and **wide** regions depopulated in Australia and elsewhere by their inroads. **Unless** they are checked, the day will come when our rabbits will **consume** all our substance, and literally eat us out of house and **home.**'

'Why can't we kill them?' said Alice, rather aghast.

'O, why?' said Lord Pennyroyal sadly. 'The only reason, I **suppose**, is because we think them so insignificant. They are so **little** and we so big. Do you think England would tolerate it if **thirty** thousand mammoths were suddenly thrown upon our shores, **or** **twenty** thousand gorillas? No; in a month there would not be **one** of them left. Why? Because we are so small and they so **big**. We should raise the country in a body, call out the yeomanry, **ride** them down, hunt them down, and shoot and trap them, and, **as** I have said, in a month there would not be a mammoth or a **gorilla** left.'

Here Lord Pennyroyal paused for breath, and they had just **dipped** down the hill beyond the old Deer Paddock in Swinley where **the** limes stand, and were looking down on the gigantic oaks below. **No** doubt he would have gone on in his crusade against the detested **rabbit**, but he was prevented.

The quick eye of Florry saw something among the trees, and **she** knew that something at a glance.

'There is a carriage down there following the road,' she said, 'and among the trees are a party of four—two ladies and two gentlemen. And,' she went on, 'the two men are Harry Fortescue and Edward Vernon, and one of the ladies is Lady Sweetapple; the other lady I do not know.'

'Of course we shall stop and speak to them,' said Alice, with an imploring look to Lady Pennyroyal, who at once understood her desire, and consented.

'A little walk will do us all good,' she said. 'The carriage can follow along the road, and pick us up when we want it.'

In a moment Florry and Alice had jumped out, and it must be confessed that Alice waved her parasol in the hope that Edward Vernon would see it. You must all forgive her, for it was in a forest far away from town, and she was young and in love.

'There is some one up there,' said Edward to Harry. 'She is waving her parasol;' and in a moment he had recognised Alice, and was running up the hill like a mad thing.

It was fortunate also that it is not the fashion for ladies to swear or else Amicia would have sworn then, just as Lord Pennyroyal would have sworn shortly before. Would you believe it? just as she was leading Harry Fortescue away under the huge oaks and beeches, and was going to have him all to herself, that provoking carriage full of her enemies arrived; and as she looked up she saw Edward Vernon warmly shaking hands with Alice Carlton, and Florry standing by her side and calling out, 'How do you do, Mr. Fortescue.'

It would have fared as ill with Florry then as with Lady Charity two hours before, had Amicia been a tyrant; only in Florry's case we do not think that Amicia would ever have repented of her deed and raised a monument to her memory.

But Amicia was a child of her time, bound by the laws of society. She could not cut, even in Swinley Park, the daughters of the women with whom she had been very glad to stay the week before. There was no help for it; she, too, had to climb the hill, to present Lady Charity to Lady Pennyroyal and the Carltons, to talk of the weather and the beauty of the woods, and to accept a proposal that they should all walk towards Ascot together, while the carriages followed. In a word, she had to do, as we most of us have to do every day of our lives, just what she most detested. Only, fortunately for us, we are not all of us every day expecting an offer either from a young gentleman, or, better still, from a young lady, and so we do not take what is unpleasant so much to heart as she did.

Of course Alice Carlton was very happy, and so was Florry, and so was Edward Vernon. Harry Fortescue was almost indifferent, but he saw in the arrival of the Pennyroyal party an escape from his immediate danger, the continuation of that *tête-à-tête* with Amicia, and he accepted Florry's appearance on the scene as an intervention.

of Providence. After Edward and Alice, who at once paired off as though they belonged to the race of turtle-doves which might be heard cooing in the trees above their heads, the person most pleased with the new-comers was Lord Pennyroyal, who saw in them fresh soil into which he might cast his Silesian sugar-beet. To Amicia's great mortification, he selected her for conversation, and as they walked along through the trees to the lodge at Swinley, he lost no opportunity of inculcating his views, not forgetting the denunciation of rabbits. In the mean time Lady Pennyroyal had informed Lady Charity that it would give her and Lord Pennyroyal 'so much pleasure,' if she and Lady Sweetapple would accompany Mr. Fortescue and Mr. Vernon to luncheon between the races to-morrow. Mr. Vernon had already given a conditional promise, and so she hoped they might all be persuaded to come. To this invitation Lady Charity was quite ready to listen; for if Harry and Edward were already half engaged, she was quite sure Amicia would only care to be where Harry was. It was settled, therefore, that they should all meet at luncheon next day.

But what were Florry and Harry about? How did they spend that little time, those few hundred yards, amid the balmy woods, where the doves were making love to each other in the green shade? We are sorry to say that Harry for a few paces walked sulkily along, and if he smiled, it was only when a squirrel frisked up a tree and looked down at them from a forked branch, or when a 'yaffle,' or green woodpecker, if you do not know the country name, laughed at them, and glided up the trunk of one of the monarchs of the forest in quest of its prey. He said nothing—absolutely nothing. For all purposes of speech he might have been as one of Amicia's old friends at the College of the Deafs and Dumbs.

But Florry Carlton was not the girl to let the man she loved walk sullenly along by her side. Her free and frank nature would have it out. The sooner there was a thunderstorm the better; it would be fine afterwards. Let there be no brooding, lowering clouds to shut out the sun. So she spoke first.

'I was so sorry to have been angry about that silly advertisement, Mr. Fortescue. Have you forgiven me?'

'There was nothing to forgive,' said Harry coldly. 'You were angry under a mistake, that was all, and there is an end to the matter.'

'O,' said Florry, 'I am so glad to hear there is an end of the matter, for I was terribly afraid of E. P.'

'Why should you be afraid of E. P., as you call her?' said Harry.

It was not pleasant to Florry to hear Harry call any woman 'her,' much less after those two initials, which were a mere abstraction, to which Harry had now given life by calling them 'her.' She answered bitterly:

‘Because I felt she was taking away a dear friend.’

‘She was nothing to me then,’ said Harry, laying an emphasis on the last word.

‘And is she something to you now, Mr. Fortescue? In men say she is not.’

‘I cannot say,’ said Harry. ‘I know, in fact, nothing about it. Poor Florry! By this time they had reached the lodge-gate.

‘If you will take my advice, Lord Pennyroyal,’ said Amicia who was heartily sick of rabbits and bored to death with sugar-beet—‘if you will take my advice, you will get into your carriage, and not attempt to walk on this dusty bit of road which leads to Ascot over the railway-bridge. It is very much cut up by carriages, and more like a desert than a road.’

No, Lord Pennyroyal would not walk, he would get into his carriage; and he proceeded to call his party together.

‘Are we all here?’ said Lady Pennyroyal. ‘Where’s Alice Carlton?’

‘Yonder, behind the big tree,’ said Florry. ‘I see her dress. I’ll call her.’ And then she cried, ‘Come along, Alice; we’re waiting for you.’

Whatever might have happened to the rest, those two under the mighty oak were lost to all feelings except their own; and so it happened that behind that great bole, which might have witnessed the rude addresses of the Saxon swineherds and handmaidens who looked after their lord’s flocks and herds on the swine lea, the vow of eternal constancy between Edward Vernon and Alice Carlton was interchanged, and when she rose in confusion from its shelter at Florry’s voice, she felt herself as much wedded to Edward Vernon as if she had been formally married by special license, or thrice called by bans in church.

And so in that short space of time one opportunity was well improved by Edward Vernon, and another as signally wasted by Harry Fortescue. While Alice was skipping up to them like a hind through the ferns, and Edward slowly following—for men recover their confusion in such cases much less rapidly than women—Amicia was measuring Florry Carlton with her eyes, and reckoning how much harm she had done her. ‘To fancy,’ she said to herself, ‘that I should have planned this drive and walk only to bring my love into the presence of my rival, and that he should have taken the walk with her, while I had to listen to rabbits and sugar-beet! It is too provoking. Though she looks so demure, I am sure, from his guilty look, that he has proposed to her and been accepted.’

By this time Alice had sought the shelter of Lady Pennyroyal, and Edward stood a little aloof. He it was that felt guilty, and he did not dare to hand Alice into the carriage. When the Pennyroyal party had departed, Lady Charity said to Lady Sweetapple:

'Now they are gone, Amicia dear, shall we have a little walk **and** listen to the nightingales? It is only just eight.'

'No,' said Amicia; 'the nightingales don't sing nearly so **sweetly** in June as they do in May. In fact, I very much doubt **whether** they sing at all.'

'What do you say, then,' said Harry, merely for the sake of **saying** something, 'to Carew's verse,

"Ask me no more whither doth haste  
The nightingale when June is past"?"

'I say nothing to it,' said Amicia crossly. 'All I know is, that **I think** the Surrey nightingales, those we heard at High Beech, far **sweeter** than these can ever be at Swinley. I don't believe in Berk-  
**shire** nightingales.'

'But,' said Edward, 'we are just on the very borders of Surrey, **for** Bagshot is in Surrey; and I daresay, if you had let Harry finish **the** quotation, he would have paid you such a pretty compliment, **and** one that would have been true, too.'

'How does it end?' said Amicia, evidently expecting Harry to **go** on and finish the verse. But Harry was again as one of the **college** at Frankfort, so Edward, who was as happy as a king, had **to** do it.

'Here it is;

"For in thy soft melodious throat  
He winters, and keeps warm his note."

'How pretty,' said Lady Charity, 'and how true as applied to **you**, Amicia! But shall we walk? I daresay, after all, we shall **hear** some nightingales.'

'I tell you,' said Amicia positively, 'there are no nightingales **in** Berkshire, and even if there were, they don't sing in June. More **than** that, if they sing, I don't care to hear them. There!' And **as** she said 'There!' she stamped her little foot, and, like Naaman **the** Syrian, turned and went away in a rage.

'What's the use?' said Harry philosophically. 'Lady Sweet-  
**ple** doesn't care to walk any more. Let us follow her to the car-  
**riage** and go home.'

So they followed her, rather in terror at her temper. 'If she **will** quarrel so with her bread-and-butter,' thought Lady Charity, **who** can help her?

'O,' said Edward to himself, 'I can see it's all right. She's **in** a rage because Harry has proposed to Florry. I'm so happy!'

'What a temper!' thought Harry Fortescue. 'I'm quite sure **Edith's** is nothing like that.'

'How provoking! how mortifying! What a fool I was to pro-  
**pose** this drive to Swinley!' said Amicia half aloud. 'Never mind, to-morrow shall see my triumph.'



This consoled her a little, and when they got into the carriage she was less cross. And so they drove home and dined, and went to bed and slept in their cabins; and as they kept the windows wide open, and plenty of fresh air came down the chimneys besides, they all slept as well as those could sleep who were so deeply lost in love.

## CHAPTER LXII.

### MRS. MARJORAM'S CONFESSION.

Ouzelmere, which the Pennyroyals had taken, was a much better house in a less picturesque position than Heath Lodge. It was, as the advertisements say, 'replete with every comfort, and in every way fitted for the luxurious abode of a family of distinction.' Of course it stood in its 'own miniature park of fifty acres.' That it had a lake was naturally, or rather, in that waterless region, unnaturally, 'a feature of the domain.' It was true that the stabling was excellent, the kitchen-garden and forcing-houses 'extensive and prolific,' the grounds beautifully laid out, and planted with the rarest conifers. If Heath Lodge was set on a hill, Ouzelmere was down in the valley, and it so happened it was the very first house that the Pennyroyals reached after they had crossed the railway-bridge coming from Swinley. Why was it called Ouzelmere? What a question! Of course, from the water-ouzels which used to inhabit the neighbouring mere, but which, it is believed, were extinct before the Conquest, about the time that the beaver left the same locality. Bones of beavers and water-ouzels have been dug up close by, by a gipsy caravan, in laying the foundation of their camp-fire, and if they could have written, they would instantly have communicated the interesting fact to the Palæontological Society; but as they could not, the scientific world knows nothing of the beavers and water-ouzels of Ascot. But what does all this prove? Surely that Ouzelmere is a very ancient place, for it was named long ago after the Saxon ouzels.

So now you know all about the archæology of Ouzelmere.

'A very excellent villa,' said Lady Pennyroyal, when she arrived and had inspected the house, 'and what charming grounds!'

'Very dear, I think, at a hundred pounds a week,' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'How they can have the conscience to ask such a sum I can't think.'

'I have often heard you say,' said Lady Pennyroyal, 'that the price of a thing is what it will fetch, and as good houses fetch the price, or more, at Ascot during the race week, I really don't see why we should grumble.'

'The weak thing was to have come at all,' said Lord Pennyroyal.



'Dear me,' said Lady Pennyroyal, anxious to change the conversation, 'I had quite forgotten the Marjorams all this while. There **they** are on the terrace. I really must go and speak to them.'

Yes, there they were on the terrace, the Marjorams. After **that** curtain lecture and his outbreak, old Marjoram slept better than **usual**; he felt freer, and as if for once he had asserted his independence. But as for Mrs. Marjoram, she was worse than usual **next** morning, feeling, perhaps, that her reign of terror was threatened. So Mr. Marjoram suffered at prayers, at breakfast, and at **luncheon**. Last of all, Mrs. Marjoram was late for the 2.5 train, **because** she would not have luncheon a little earlier than usual, and **so** they had to go down by the 4.45 train, with all the stockbrokers **who** live on the line, and all the horse-jockeys who live on the races. There was, therefore, a great rush of snobs and blackguards, and 'respectable people,' as Mrs. Marjoram designated her husband and **herself**, suffered accordingly. However, they got down to Ascot, **only** nearly an hour late—'very good going,' as the guard said—and **the** only dreadful thing that happened was that Mrs. Marjoram's **big** black box had to be left behind at the station, because there **were** neither flies, nor trucks, nor porters to take charge of it.

'If you were a man,' said Mrs. Marjoram, 'you would take it **up** on your back, Mr. Marjoram, and carry it for me to Ouzelmere. **That's** what you ought to be willing to do on an emergency like **this**.'

'But, my dear,' said Mr. Marjoram, 'I say with Shakespeare, "I dare do all that doth become a man;" but no man can be **expected** to carry on his back a box that weighs two hundredweight.'

'Mr. Marjoram,' said Mrs. Marjoram, like a vinegar-cruet full of Chili vinegar, so sharp was she—'Mr. Marjoram, how often have I forbidden you to shock my feelings by quotations from plays and playwrights? It is all very fine to say you can't carry my box—which, after all, is not so heavy—but how, I should like to know, **am** I to dress for dinner without my amber satin?'

'I am sure I can't tell,' said Mr. Marjoram stoutly.

'Mr. Marjoram,' said Mrs. Marjoram, now lashed into fury, 'I **insist** on your taking up my box and carrying it! When I married **you**, I thought I had married a man.'

'And when I married you,' said Mr. Marjoram, with unpardonable rudeness, 'I thought I had married a wife, but I have found **you** a tyrant.'

'Take up my box!' shrieked Mrs. Marjoram.

'I'll be hanged if I do!' said Mr. Marjoram. 'Suppose one of **the** false prophets had said to any one, "Take up your bed, and **walk**," do you think the mere order would have enabled him to do **it**?'

'Do you compare me to a false prophet?' said Mrs. Marjoram.

'I don't know what to compare you to,' said Mr. Marjoram; 'but I shall first leave this box in charge of the station-master, with orders to send it up to Ouzelmere as soon as he can, and then I am going to walk to Ouzelmere, and if you don't choose to come with me, you can stay behind.'

Mrs. Marjoram stared at her husband as though she could not believe her ears, but she said nothing; and when Mr. Marjoram returned from his interview with the station-master, she followed him like a lamb.

You may well all of you stare, as much as Mrs. Marjoram,—at you wives and husbands who have hitherto only known the hen-pecked Marjoram. Yet so it was; the last grain had been heaped on the camel's back, and, instead of breaking it, the camel had kicked and thrown off the whole load, and asserted his independence.

What passed between that pair, as they plodded down the line to the private entrance to Ouzelmere, no one can tell. Some changes are only known by their results. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' As for Mrs. Marjoram herself, you all know she was of that school which delights in sudden conversions—in a great blaze of light pouring into the heart, and enlightening it in the twinkling of an eye. She was not naturally a bad woman, but long habit and her husband's easiness had turned her into a tyrant. She had grown to be intensely selfish and domineering without knowing it, as is the very nature of selfishness to fancy it is making great sacrifices; and so it is, for it is offering up all the rest of the world on the altar of its own conceit. But now Mrs. Marjoram had found her master, and acknowledged him. She had at last roused the sleeping tyrant which lies in the heart of every lord of the creation and had to confess, nay, confessed it willingly, that she was a wife and not a ruler, in her husband's house.

So it was, that when Lady Pennyroyal went to the Marjorams and hoped they had got down safely and without trouble, Mr. Marjoram said rather gruffly,

'We had no trouble till we got to the station, and there, I am sorry to say, we had to leave our luggage behind.'

'Yes,' said Mrs. Marjoram very meekly; 'but it was all my fault for bringing so big a box. Mr. Marjoram's portmanteau might have come well enough, but no truck could carry my monster.'

'Pray don't say anything more about it, my dear,' said Mr. Marjoram. 'It was as much my fault as yours. Besides, there is always trouble at railway stations during the races.'

Lady Pennyroyal looked from one to the other in great perplexity—it was so unusual to hear Mr. and Mrs. Marjoram agreeing in anything. But it was no part of hers to take any notice of this *strange fact*, so she only said:

'I do hope your box will come after all.' Then, with her usual kindness, she added, 'As ~~we~~ came here to enjoy ourselves, I think, for to-day at least, we will not have any dressing for dinner, and then it won't matter whether your box comes before dinner or not. If it hasn't come by ten o'clock we will send two of the servants down to the station to bring it back, or, at any rate, to see that it comes.'

'Thank you so much, dear Lady Pennyroyal,' said Mrs. Marjoram; and then she and her husband set out for another turn in the grounds.

'I never saw such a change in my life,' said Lady Pennyroyal to herself. 'They're just like Alice Carlton and Edward Vernon. How glad I am that match is settled!'

'And is it all right, Alice dear?' said Florry Carlton to her sister when they got upstairs.

'Quite right, darling,' said Alice. 'I have even told him that ~~papa~~ and mamma quite approve of it.'

'Happy girl!' said Florry. 'And what did he say?'

'Very little,' said Alice, 'very little; but he was very pleased, and—and—I sha'n't tell you what he either said or did.'

'Happy girl,' repeated Florry, 'to be engaged to the man you love.'

'And you, Florry darling?' said Alice.

'Don't ask me, Alice,' said Florry; but for all that, in two minutes Florry told Alice all that had passed between Harry Fortescue and herself.

'I can't understand it at all,' said Alice.

'Nor can I,' said Florry. 'He was so nice up to that Saturday morning, and then all at once his manner changed.'

'I wonder if Lady Sweetapple has anything to do with it,' said Alice.

'Of course she has,' said Florry; 'she's like idleness in the copy-book—the root of all evil.'

'It looks as if she had Harry in her power, by his being down here,' said Alice, who did not know that Harry had come down for other reason than to oblige Edward.

'Yes,' said Florry savagely—'yes; and then taking him out for a walk in Swinley. Of course she meant to walk with Harry, and poor Edward was to stay behind or go before with that old goose, Lady Charity. It is as plain as day; but, thank Heaven, we stopped all that, and she had to listen to sugar-beet instead. I'm so glad she was disappointed.'

'And so am I,' said Alice, for whose satisfaction at having met Edward so unexpectedly we might coin a new word. If Amicia Sweetapple was 'disappointed,' as Florry Carlton said, then Alice was 'appointed' at being engaged to Edward Vernon.

'They are coming to luncheon between the races to-morrow, you know,' said Florry.

'Perhaps Harry will be in a better temper then,' said Alice.

'No, I'm sure he won't,' said Florry. 'He will never be in a good temper so long as he is with that odious woman.'

'But if he's always in a bad temper when he is with her,' said Alice, 'don't you see, dear, he's not likely to propose to her; for men never propose to any one when they're in a bad temper.'

'We shall see,' said Florry; 'in a day or two we shall all be wiser.'

Then the Ouzelmere gong sounded—for of course Ouzelmere had its gong like all respectable country houses—and the sisters went down to dinner, and saw Mrs. Marjoram, not 'clothed,' but 'in her right mind,' as Florry profanely said.

During dinner Lord Pennyroyal was very genial. Perhaps he was pleased at his cousin Marjoram's quiet victory over his domestic tyrant; perhaps he thought he should now have a willing listener to his denunciation of rabbits and praise of sugar-beet. Whatever it was, he was very pleasant, and even seemed to understand, what some people never will see, the difference between colloquy and soliloquy; he not only talked himself, but he allowed others to talk. When dinner was over, they all walked round the grounds of Ouzelmere; and in spite of Amicia's declaration that the Berkshire nightingales could not sing, they did just hear a few late birds 'jugg-jugging' in the sultry summer night.

Then Alice pressed Florry's hand.

'Ah, if Edward were only here to listen to it too!'

'Silly child,' said Florry, 'why not be content? You have had nine-tenths of your way; will not that satisfy you? I have not even one-tenth.'

No! It is hard when Love cannot have his tithes. He ceases to be a god, and to be worshipped.

'O, but you know,' said Alice, drawing still closer to her sister, 'you know it is so sweet to have that last tenth, that all the rest seem as nothing till one gets it. I can enjoy nothing now without Edward.'

'And I nothing without Harry,' said Florry; 'and yet I have no hope of having him. Compare your case with mine, and be thankful.'

At the same time Mr. and Mrs. Marjoram were sitting in an arbour, looking up at the stars; and to hear them talk one would have thought they had changed skins with Colonel and Mrs. Barker, such a loving pair they seemed. But we have no time to tell what they said; the fact must suffice.

As for Lord and Lady Pennyroyal, they too walked about lovingly, and looked up at the everlasting stars. In spite of his

giness Lord Pennyroyal was a fine fellow, and, as we have told, capable of great acts of generosity, though his daily life was ruled by the profession of meanness. And so they too were happy, for Lady Pennyroyal was very fond of him.

And after they had thus gazed and talked in pairs for an hour, Lady Pennyroyal called them in to go to bed.

‘We have a hard week before us,’ she said, ‘and we must go to bed early and rise early.’

### CHAPTER LXIII.

#### THE FIRST DAY OF THE RACES.

NEXT day was Tuesday, the first day of the races, and, according to the description of the newspapers, ‘the royal meeting’ began under the ‘most favourable auspices.’ The weather was glorious—right hot sun, tempered with a refreshing breeze. Of course there was dust. Races or no races, there is no day without its dust at Ascot. Dusty the heath is, and dusty it will remain, till the last day is turned to dust himself. There was the royal party and the liveries, the gay toilettes and the fair faces in the Enclosure. Large attendance, free from the horseplay and vulgarity of Epsom. It was the Ascot meeting of 1870.

Of course Lady Charity and Amicia had a box. It is ten years cheaply spent; and from that box they were able not only to see the races themselves, but to let their friends see them. The first thing that the party from Heath Lodge saw, as they were crossing the dusty road to the entrance to the race-course, was the royal party plodding along, through a cloud of dust and a throng of carriages, for the Grand Stand, in which every eligible seat had been long since seized and occupied.

‘Haven’t you got a box?’ asked Lady Charity of Lady Pennyroyal. But before the question could be answered Lord Pennyroyal came in,

‘No, we have not; I really cannot afford it. It is bad enough to make a house at a ruinous rate without having to take a box besides. I like to be free to move about.’

‘If Lady Pennyroyal and the rest of the ladies would come into a box at once, I should be so glad,’ said Lady Charity.

Dear thing, she was determined to ask them, in spite of the black looks of Amicia.

Lady Pennyroyal looked at her husband, who said at once,

‘O, if Lady Pennyroyal wishes it I have no objection. I dare say Marjoram and I will be quite happy walking about on the green.’

‘What do you say, Mrs. Marjoram?’ said Lady Pennyroyal.

‘I will go where Mr. Marjoram goes.’

So it was settled that Lady Pennyroyal and Florry and Alice should go at once to the 'Charity box,' as Amicia called it, while the Earl and the Marjorams walked about, and tried their luck in the Grand Stand.

'Remember luncheon at three o'clock,' said Lady Pennyroyal, and they parted.

We are sorry that this is not to be an elaborate history of the Ascot Meeting of 1870. So far from this, we do not even know whether our story will last out till the Cup-day, that Thursday of toil and trouble which is really the least enjoyable day of the four. We can only briefly say, therefore, that the racing began with the Trial Stakes, in which what the sporting men call 'a speedy miler,' Sir Joseph Hawley's Rosicrucian, and Captain Machell's Jack-in-the-box, and fifteen others, were very cleverly beaten by Green Ribbon, a horse unbacked by his owner and considered a 'roarer,' but who for all that won in splendid style. So far as the party in the Charity box were concerned, that race was chiefly interesting because on it Edward Vernon lost a dozen pairs of gloves to Alice Carlton; while Harry Fortescue, when challenged both by Florry Carlton and Amicia, resolutely refused to bet at all.

'What a big horse!' said Edward Vernon, when he saw Mr. Merry's Perth win the next race.

'I should think he was, and I have just backed him for his size,' said a well-known voice behind him; and when Edward turned round he saw Mr. Beeswing, and behind him Count Pantouffles, who was engaged in a series of elaborate bows to all the ladies. Count Pantouffles would no more have omitted bowing separately to every lady than a man-of-war would neglect to salute the port-admiral on coming into harbour.

'Very hot day and very fine weather,' said Count Pantouffles to Amicia; 'and the train, mon Dieu, it was asphyxiating!'

'I darsay,' said Amicia, to whom every new-comer was a cause for anxiety, as she felt she was so much the farther removed from that *tête-à-tête* which she longed to have with Harry.

'We saw Lord Pennyroyal and Marjoram and Mrs. Marjoram outside on the green in the sun,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'They all seemed very happy, and Pennyroyal said he would not be cooped up in a box for anything. I thought Mrs. Marjoram looked rather subdued.'

'You will find her subdued in more ways than one, if it only lasts,' said Lady Pennyroyal in a low voice.

'If what lasts?' asked Mr. Beeswing. 'Do you mean the sun? Why, the sun will last for ever. At any rate he does not wear out his constitution by shining too much in England. Whatever he may do in the tropics, he is not prodigal of his rays in this part of the world. I suspect the sun has a wife in Europe who keeps him in order, as Mrs. Marjoram does Marjoram.'



'Don't talk nonsense,' said Lady Pennyroyal. 'It is well known he has no wife. He is a bachelor, and that's why at this time of year he goes to bed so late.'

'Ah, but if he goes to bed late he rises very early; in that at least he is like Marjoram.'

'I tell you, you will find it all changed with the Marjorams.'

'Since when?' said Mr. Beeswing.

'Since yesterday,' said Lady Pennyroyal.

'I don't believe in sudden conversions,' said Mr. Beeswing.

'The next race was to be the Hunt Cup, and as only two 'animals' were entered for it, the ladies voted it a bore; besides, they were getting hungry, and longed for luncheon.'

'How shall we get to Ouzelmere?' said Lady Pennyroyal. 'It is a quarter of a mile under a broiling sun, but Lord Pennyroyal will not have his horses out; they were too tired, he said.'

'That is easily settled,' said the thoughtful Lady Charity. 'My carriage is ordered outside at half-past two. It is now a quarter to two, and it will take us and Mrs. Marjoram, if we can find her. The men may walk.'

'So they left the box and found the carriage patiently waiting for them, but they could not find Mrs. Marjoram, and so they were obliged to go without her, and drove off.'

'Count Pantouffles looked very much in his patent-leather boots, though he would have liked to have a lift, but he did not get it, and had to tramp along the road with the rest. Edward and Mr. Beeswing were in high spirits, Harry as dull as ditch-water, and Count Pantouffles as lively as usual.'

As they trudged along the road and were just going to cut across the heathy bit on the left to the short cut to Ouzelmere, Edward turned round, at the risk of being blown into a pillar of sand, which the wind blew into his eyes and over his raiment.

'Holloa!' he said; 'hold hard, here come Lord Pennyroyal and the Marjorams in chase.'

'So they halted till the chasers came up, the men grimy with dust, and Mrs. Marjoram 'hot, dusty, and diliquescent,' as the poet's wife immortalised by Sydney Smith.

'I'm so glad you turned back, Mr. Vernon,' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'We knew you by your backs and Count Pantouffles' fine back.' Here the Count bowed, 'but we should never have overtaken you had not stopped.'

'I hope you have enjoyed yourself, Mrs. Marjoram,' said Mr. Beeswing, feeling his way with that redoubtable woman.

'Oh, indeed, it was charming. Mr. Marjoram was so kind, and so was Lord Pennyroyal. We saw everything, and, in fact, I am quite an authority on racing.'

'It was really great fun,' said Mr. Marjoram; 'but,' turning to

Mrs. Marjoram, 'I am so sorry you missed the carriage, and have to walk along the dusty road.'

'O, pray don't think of me,' said Mrs. Marjoram; 'I am quite happy to walk along the road with you.'

'I am not going to walk along this road,' said Edward. 'Here is a short cut across the heath to Ouzelmere, and I am going to take French leave of the lord of the manor.'

If Lord Pennyroyal could have had his way he would have protested against this trespass, and of the irreverent way in which Edward Vernon spoke of manorial rights, for was he not lord of at least a hundred manors? But as all followed Edward's example in climbing up the bank and getting on to the heath, Mrs. Marjoram being tenderly helped up by her husband, Lord Pennyroyal would have been left alone to protest on the dusty road, so he put his remonstrance in his pocket and climbed up the bank too.

'How charming it is here!' said Edward, as they followed him across the heath through the self-sown fir-trees. 'See, yonder below us are the Ouzelmere chimney-tops. Come along, we shall soon be there.'

So he strode along, and the rest followed as they could. Mr. Beeswing came last of all with Count Pantouffles, who was dreadfully afraid of the dragon-flies as they shot about; and as they went Mr. Beeswing shook his head and said to himself,

'Talk of miracles! Why, this is a sudden conversion, indeed!'

In a few minutes they had crossed the heath and come into the Ouzelmere plantations, where, through the Wellingtonias, and Decadas, and cypresses, they reached the house.

So there were the greater portion of the High-Beech party assembled at Ascot. Alice and Edward as acknowledged lovers—for these secrets soon ooze out amongst women—and Florry and Amicia as rivals for the love of Harry Fortescue, who, as Mr. Beeswing confided to Lady Pennyroyal, was decidedly the 'dark horse' of the meeting. Then, again changing the metaphor from the horse to his owner, he said, 'He could go in and win with either, only he won't "declare."'

'Perhaps he does not like to be hurried,' said Lady Pennyroyal. 'My own opinion is, that he would have proposed long ago to Florry, had not Lady Sweetapple been in the way.'

'Lovers are such strange beings,' said Mr. Beeswing; 'but of all strange beings commend me to Mrs. Marjoram. The miracle of Cana in Galilee was a miracle indeed, but that was only the change of water into wine; but here we have vinegar turned at once into oil. I never heard of such a thing in my life.'

'Pray don't be so profane,' said Lady Pennyroyal; 'I don't like it.'

'But you confess the miracle?' said Mr. Beeswing.

'I confess nothing,' said Lady Pennyroyal; 'but I see a very welcome change in Mrs. Marjoram's manner to her husband.'

'Do you think it comes from reading the *Whole Duty of Man*?' said Mr. Beeswing.

'Say, rather, from reflection on the whole duty of woman,' said Lady Pennyroyal. 'But don't continue the subject, pray; here come the Marjorams.'

We need not dwell on that race luncheon. It was as most race feasts—a kind of Passover eaten in haste, the men with their sticks and the women with their parasols in their hands.

'We must make haste back,' said Amicia, 'or we shall miss so many of the races.'

Sly thing! all she wanted was not to leave Florry and Harry for a minute.

Back therefore they went, with their meal not in their sacks, but in their throats. On this occasion Mrs. Marjoram was squeezed into the open carriage, which fortunately was a big one, and the gentlemen plodded back across the dry heath and dusty road. Harry and Edward were still faithful to the box, but Count Pantouffles went off on a bowing expedition with Mr. Beeswing. To say that he was supreme in his art, as usual, would but give a faint notion of the exquisite way in which he glided through the crowd in the enclosure, bowing right and left as he went.

'I'll bet a pony,' said a racing swell, 'that Pantouffles can take off his hat and put it on again sixty times in a minute. Look at him; there he goes.'

'Done, Charley,' said another betting swell.

'When shall it come off?'

'At Newmarket, at the Houghton Meeting.'

'Done,' said Charley; and so the match was made.

'It would be much better to handicap Pantouffles against another good bower,' said a third swell. 'The admiral would do it, I'll be bound.'

'Too late,' said Charley; 'the match is made.'

And so the brilliant idea of handicapping Pantouffles against another bower came to nothing.

When they got back to the box, the ladies found they had only left one race, the Queen's Gold Vase, which only brought two competitors to the post; Formosa, winner of the Leger in 1868, and Siderolite, said by his friends to be the best cup horse in England. The mare had been made the favourite, but Siderolite beat her easily, in spite of Fordham's resolute riding, which some one told Mr. Beeswing was a sight to see. This friend was one of that consoling class who always try to make out, if you miss anything, that you have lost the sight of the day.

'There's as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it,' said

Mr. Beeswing. 'I daresay we shall see some good racing in the Prince of Wales' Stakes.'

'I don't think you will,' said his friend, who turned away to find some one else to make uncomfortable.

But, for all that, the Prince's Stakes did produce a very good race, and, moreover, it was a great surprise. King o' Scots, one of the sturdy King Tom's children, won easily by two lengths. He was out of the betting, and thirty to one might have been had against him; but he rushed to the front at once with the lead, and kept it to the end.

'I never saw such a hollow thing,' said Mr. Beeswing, who had found his way into the Charity box again. 'I wish I had put him here some of the money I lost on him in the Two Thousand Guineas.'

At this Amicia, who had been really looking at the race, turned round to see if Harry Fortescue was all right; but he was gone. He had left the box without making any sign.

'Where's Mr. Fortescue?' asked Amicia, and then her eyes sought for Florry, for she was afraid that Harry might have gone out to take a turn with her rival on the Green or in the Fenchurch Road, but there sat Florry, between Alice and Edward Vernon. To her Harry's sudden departure was just as much a surprise as to Amicia.

'O,' said Mr. Beeswing, 'I can tell you something about him. Just as I came in, I met your servant, Lady Charity, and he begged me to give Mr. Fortescue a telegram which had just come for him. I gave it to Harry, and then turned my attention to the race. I suppose he has gone out to answer it.'

'It is very odd,' said Amicia. 'I do trust he will soon come back.'

So they sat in the box and saw the rest of the races run; but what cared Florry Carlton or Amicia Sweetapple whether a starling favourite was easily defeated by Sir Joseph's Pink for the Two-Year-old Maiden Plate, or whether Mr. Merry's good-looking colt, King of the Forest, won the Queen's Stand Plate very cleverly from Rattle-bone, 'one of the fastest animals of the day over a short course.' The racing, good or bad, was nothing to them without Harry Fortescue, and Harry never came back. At last, just as the last race was being run, a railway porter put his head into the box, and spoke loud enough for every one in it to hear, 'Is Mr. Vernon here?'

'Here I am,' said Edward. 'What do you want?'

'There's a gentleman just gone up to town by the train who begged me to give you this, and ask you for 'alf-a-crown.'

'Here it is,' said Edward, tossing the coin to the man, who vanished, and as he did so, Edward whispered to Alice:

'It is from Harry. Shall I open it?'

'Of course,' cried Florry, who had overheard the whisper. 'What's the use of a note if it is not to be opened?'

So Edward Vernon opened it and read :

‘Dear Ned,—I am obliged to go back to town on business. can’t tell when I shall be back. Make my apologies to the ladies.  
—Yours ever, H. F.’

The eyes of all were turned on Edward as he read the note.

‘Is Mr. Fortescue ill?’ said Amicia anxiously.

‘Please tell me what is in the note,’ said Florry in the same one.

‘Do read it out, Edward,’ said Alice.

‘I think I may read it out,’ said Edward, ‘without any breach of confidence.’

Then he read it out, and the faces of two of his listeners at least were clouded as he read.

‘Gone to town on business!’ cried Florry, who got her breath first, and jumped off with the lead like one of the speedy fillies which they had just seen.

‘Gone to town on business!’ echoed Amicia. ‘What business has he to go to town, or rather, what business has he to take him to town?’

But gone Harry Fortescue was. Of that there could be no sort of doubt; and, in the face of that fact, it was useless to conjecture why he went.

‘He has gone away,’ said Florry to Alice as soon as they got back to Ouzelmere. ‘He has gone, and taken my life with him. I am sure that horrid woman has frightened him away.’

‘If that forward Florry had not thrust herself into our box, I am convinced he would have stayed. How can a young man propose to one woman when he knows that another is always watching him?’ That was what Amicia said to herself as they walked across the road to Heath Lodge.

In a little while the reader will see how mistaken they both are.

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## IN HARVEST

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In August, when the golden glow  
Of harvest gleam'd 'neath heaven's blue,  
In molten waves of rich red wheat,  
And soft winds swept the barley through ;

When purple plums hung on the tree,  
And ruddy nectarines to the wall  
Clung nestling mid their thick green leaves,—  
I met the one whom best of all

I love on earth. Amid the groups  
Of jocund reapers on we stray'd ;  
And words were spoken, troth exchanged,  
'Twixt stalwart man and blushing maid.

The skylark pour'd his joyous notes  
With burst of rapture from on high ;  
But sweeter music in our hearts  
We felt awaken'd—she and I.

The red peach on the trellis blush'd,  
The sunbeams lent her beauty rare ;  
Rosier than peach my own love's cheek,  
Brighter than sun her golden hair.

O pure and sweet, O fair and dear,  
O star that shinest on my way,  
May our joint life be ever calm  
As that all-glorious autumn day !

ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.



# BELGRAVIA

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SEPTEMBER 1872

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## TO THE BITTER END

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

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### CHAPTER XXIX. A RECOVERED TREASURE.

RICHARD REDMAYNE went back to Brierwood after his visit to Hetheridge churchyard, and the dreary days went on. A lost pacing those garden walks, or loitering under the old cedar, would hardly have been a more dismal figure than the farmer, with listless gait and haggard face, unshaven chin and slovenly attire. He was waiting idly for his agents in London to do something; speculating on the possibility of discovering his enemy by the intervention of the sexton—a dreary business altogether; his land in other hands, no work to be done, no interest in the young green man, no care, no hope; his whole being consumed by one fatal passion—more constant than love, more bitter than jealousy.

He had not spoken to John Wort since that night when he stood in upon the agent in his little office, sudden and violent as a thunderbolt. The two men avoided each other. Mr. Wort had his reasons for that avoidance, and Richard Redmayne shrank from companionship. He smoked all day long, drank more than he had been used to drink in the old days, and paced the weedy gravel path, or lay at full length under the cedar, lost in gloomy thought. He had needed any external influence to sharpen his sense of loss, his familiar home, once so happy and now so desolate, would have wished that influence; every flower in the garden, every petty thing in the house, where all things were old and familiar, was in some wise associated with his daughter. He could not have felt death more intensely if he had spent his days and nights beside a grave.

The longest day had dragged its slow length along, and the corn was beginning to change colour when, after some weeks of sultry

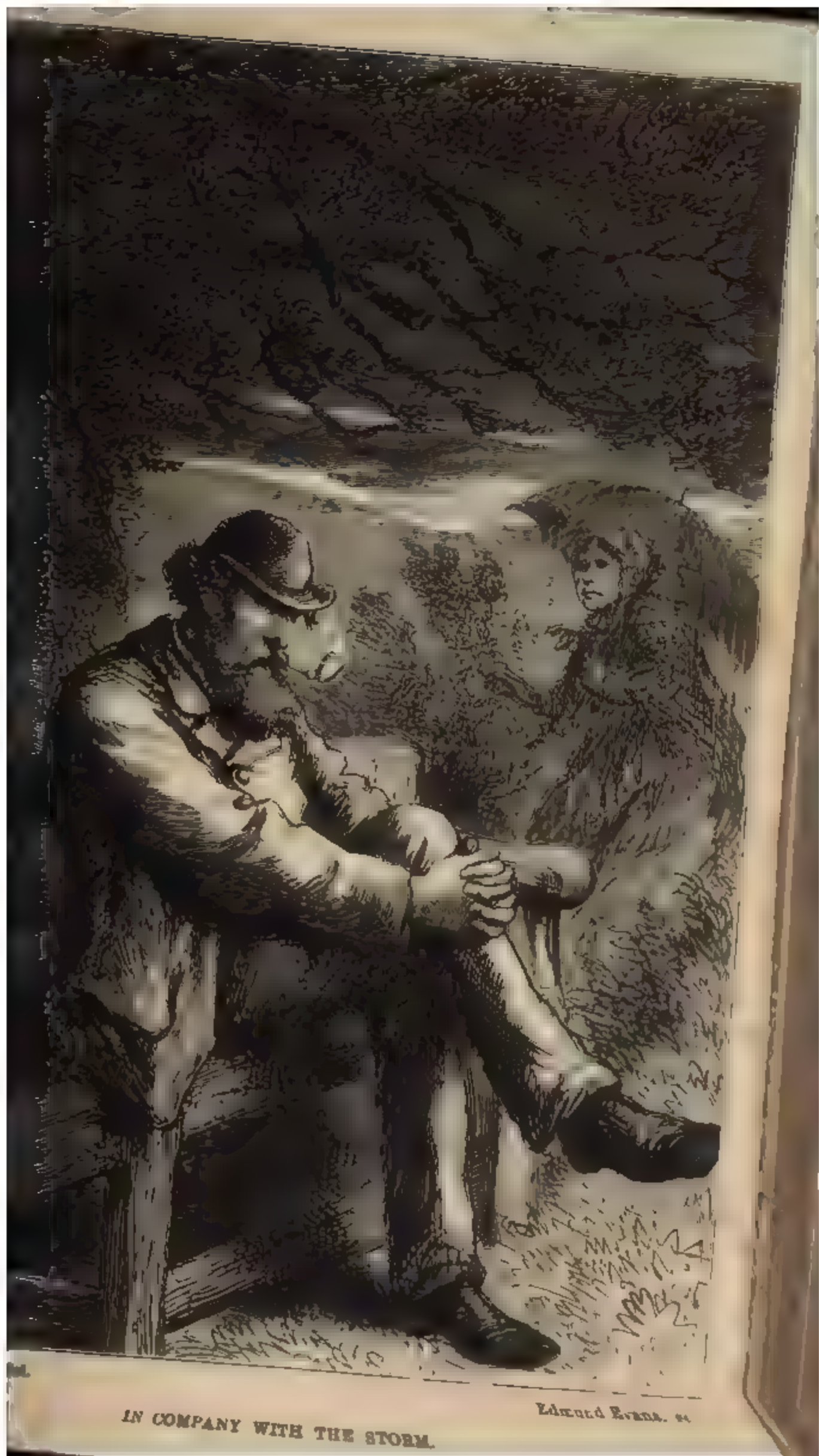
and oppressive weather, there came a great storm—one of those tempests which spread consternation over all the country side, filling the souls of farmers with hideous visions of beaten corn and lightning-struck cattle, and which people talk of and remember for the rest of the year. It was on a Sunday evening, just after church-time, when the first thunder-peal roared hoarsely among the distant hills, and the first vivid flash of forked lightning zigzagged across the low leaden sky. Richard Redmayne was sitting under the cedar, smoking, as usual, with an unread Sunday paper lying on his knee, and his eyes fixed dreamily on the line of poplars that rose above the garden wall. He was not afraid of a little thunder and lightning, and sat for a couple of hours, after this first swelling chord in the tempestuous symphony, watching the progress of the storm with a gloomy delight in its awful grandeur, with almost a sense of relief in this sudden awakening of earth and sky from their summer silence, as if his own sluggish heart were stirred and lightened a little by the storm.

It was only when the rain began to fall in torrents, and Mrs. Bush came out, dripping like a rustic naiad, under a dilapidated cotton umbrella, to entreat him piteously to come indoors, that he roused himself from that morbid sympathy with the elements, and rose from his bench under the cedar, stretching himself, and looking round him half bewildered.

'It's that dark as you can't see your hand before you, Mr. Redmayne, between whiles, and that vivid when it lightens as you can dextinguish every leaf on the trees, and to think of your sitting here all the time! My good man says as how you must have gone to Kingsbury village. I've been that fidgety about you, I didn't know what to do; so at last I says to my William, "If I gets wet to the bone, I'll go and see if he's in the garden;" and as soon as I came to the edge of the grass, which is like a bog, it lightened just in my eyes like, and I see you sitting here like a statter. You'll be a lucky man, Mr. Redmayne, if you're not laid up with the rheumatics along of this night's work.'

'A few drops of rain won't hurt me, Mrs. Bush; but I'll come indoors, if you like. The storm is worth watching; but I reckon it'll be bad for Davis's corn. It's lucky the hops are no forwarder.' Davis was the tenant, for whom Mr. Redmayne had some natural compassion, as became a man whose interests and duties had once been bounded by those hedgerows.

He went indoors to oblige Mrs. Bush, but would not allow the garden door to be barred that night, and sat up long after the house-keeper and her husband had gone to their roost in their garret—till the tempest was over, and the sun was shining on the sodden trees and beaten flower-beds, and the birds were twittering in the calm morning air, as in the overture to *William Tell*. He walked round



IN COMPANY WITH THE STORM.

Edmund Spenser. 21



the garden, looking idly at the ruin of roses and jasmine, carnations and lavender bushes, before he went upstairs to his room.

It was late when he came down to his solitary breakfast, and the countenance of Mrs. Bush was solemn with the weight of a startling communication when she brought him his dish of eggs and bacon.

'Such a calamity, Mr. Redmayne!' she exclaimed; 'I felt certain sure as the storm would do some damage; and it have. Mr. Davis have had a fine young heifer struck dead, and the pollard beech Martinmas field is blown down.'

'The old pollard beech!' cried Richard; 'the tree my mother was so fond of,—and Grace too. I'm sorry for that.'

Mrs. Bush shook her head in a dismal way, and sighed plaintively. He so rarely mentioned his daughter, although she was bursting with sympathy.

'And so she was, Mr. Redmayne—poor dear love—uncommon fond of Martinmas field and that old tree. I've seen her take her book or her fancy work up there many an afternoon, when you was in foreign parts. "I'm tired of the garden, Mrs. Bush," she'd say; "I think I'll go up to Martinmas field, and sit a-bit." And I used to say, "Do, Miss Gracey; you look to want a blow of fresh air;" for she was very pale that last autumn before we lost her, poor dear. And when the hop-picking was about, she'd sit under the pollard beech talking to the children, no matter how dirty nor how ragged, she was that gentle with 'em! It was enough to bring the tears into your eyes to see her.'

'I'm sorry the old beech is gone,' said Richard thoughtfully. He remembered a tea-drinking they had had by that tree one mild afternoon in the hop-harvest, and Grace singing her simple ballads to them afterwards by the light of the hunter's moon. What a changed world it was without her!

He made short work of his breakfast, which was as flavourless as all the rest of his dismal meals; and set out immediately afterwards to inspect the fallen beech in Martinmas field. Very rarely had he trodden the land tenanted by Farmer Davis, but to-day he was bent on seeing the nature of the accident which had robbed him of one of his favourite landmarks, the tree that had been ancient in the time of his great-grandfather.

The ruin was complete; the massive trunk snapped like the spar of a storm-driven vessel, broken short off within three feet from the roots. A couple of farm labourers—men who had worked for Richard Redmayne when he farmed his own land—were already hard at work digging out the roots, which spread wide about the base of the fallen tree. Farmer Davis was a smart man, in the Transatlantic sense of the word, and did not suffer the grass to grow under his feet.

'Gettin' rid of this here old beech will give him a rood of land

more at this corner,' said one of the men, when Mr. Redmayne had surveyed the scene, and said a word or two about the storm. 'He allus did grumble about this tree, the grass was that sour under it; so now he'll be happy.'

'I'm sorry it's gone, for all that,' replied Rick, contemplating it gloomily.

He seated himself on a gate close by, and watched the men at their work, idly and hopelessly, thinking of the days that were gone. He sat for nearly an hour without speaking a word; and the men glanced at him now and then furtively, wondering at the change that had come upon him since the old time when they had called him master. He took his pipe from his pocket, and solaced himself with that silent comforter. He was sitting thus, with his eyes fixed on the distant horizon, when one of the men, who had been digging out a rugged arm of the root from a little hollow into which the dead leaves had drifted, tossed some glittering object away with the leaves upon his spade, and uttered a cry of surprise, as he stooped to pick it up.

'Why, what's this here?' he exclaimed, turning it over in his broad hand. 'A gold brooch!'

It was not a brooch, but a large oval locket. Richard Redmayne roused himself from his reverie to see what this stir was about; and at sight of that golden toy broke out with a loud oath, that startled the men more than the finding of the treasure.

'It's Grace's locket,' he cried; 'the locket my daughter lost three years ago! See if there isn't a bunch of blue flowers painted inside.'

He had heard the history of the locket from Mrs. James, and had forgotten no detail of the one gift which the fatal stranger had sent his child.

'It's uncommon hard to open,' said the man, operating upon the trinket with his clumsy thumb. 'Yes, here's the blue flowers, sure enough, and I suppose there ain't no doubt about the locket being your property, sir, so here it is.'

'And here's a sovereign for you and your mate,' replied Richard Redmayne, tossing the coin into the man's hand.

He took the locket, and sat for some time looking at it thoughtfully as it lay in the palm of his hand—poor relic of the dead. She had worn it round her neck every day, Mrs. James had told him; had loved it for the sake of the treacherous giver. 'I ought to have thought of hunting for it about here,' he said to himself, 'knowing she was fond of sitting under the beech. I suppose it dropped from her ribbon and fell into the hollow, and so got buried among the dead leaves. And she grieved for the loss of it, Hannah told me. Poor child, poor child; she was no more than a child to be tempted by such toys.'



He put the trinket into his pocket, and walked slowly homewards; and from that time forward he carried it about him, with his keys and loose money, in an indiscriminate heap. The spring, which was made to defy the eye of jealousy, was not proof against his rough usage, and became loosened from constant friction. Thus it happened that, when Mr. Redmayne dropped the locket one day, the false back flew open, and the miniature stood revealed.

He swooped upon it as a kite upon its prey. Yes, this was the face he had heard of; but how much handsomer and younger than Mrs. James's description had led him to suppose! He sat for an hour gazing at it, and thinking of the time when he should come face to face with its owner, should look into the eyes of the living man as he now looked into the eyes of the picture. Nemesis had put this portrait in his way.

'It'll be hard if I don't find him now,' he said to himself.

He went up to London, took the miniature to a photographer, and had it copied carefully, painted in as finished a manner as the original; and this copy he gave to Mr. Kendel, the private inquirer.

'You told me you could do something if you had a picture of the man I want to find,' he said; 'and here is his miniature.'

'An uncommonly good-looking fellow,' remarked Mr. Kendel, as he examined the photograph. 'I'll do my best, of course, Mr. Redmayne, and the portrait may be of some use; but if I were you, I wouldn't build too much on finding the man.'

### CHAPTER XXX.

'LOOK BACK! A THOUGHT WHICH BORDERS ON DESPAIR.'

THE London season waned, and Mr. and Mrs. Walgrave Harcross went on a duty visit to Mr. Vallory, at the villa in the Isle of Wight; not an unpleasant abiding-place after the perpetual streets and squares, with their dingy foliage and smoky skies. They had the Arion, on board which smart craft Mr. Harcross could lie under awning and read metaphysics, without giving himself much trouble to follow the propositions of his author; while Augusta talked society talk with the bosom friend of the moment. Of course they came to Ryde when the place was fullest, and it was only a migration from a larger heaven of Dinners and At Homes to a smaller, with slight variations and amendments in the way of yachting and picnicking.

Weston was with them. He was now much too useful a person to be neglected by his uncle; he had indeed become, by his exhaustible industry and undeviating watchfulness, the very eye and soul of the firm in Old Jewry. There was still a tradition that in affairs of magnitude Mr. Vallory's voice was as the voice of Goliath; but Mr. Vallory indulged his gout a good deal, gave his fine

mind not a little to the science of dining; and the rising generation of City men were tolerably satisfied with the counsels and service of Weston. He was less inclined to formality than the seniors of Harcross and Vallory had been; brought his own mind to bear upon a case at a moment's notice; would take up his pen and dash off the very letter in the vain endeavour to compose which a client had been racking his brain by day and night for a week. He leaned less on counsels' opinion than the firm had been wont to lean; and indeed did not scruple to profess a good-humoured contempt for the gentlemen of the long robe. The business widened under his fostering care; he was always to be found; and his ante-chamber, a spacious room where a couple of clerks worked all day at two huge copying machines, damping, pressing, drying the autograph epistles of the chief, was usually full of busy men eating their hearts out in the agony of waiting. He was free of access to all, and there was now much less of that winnowing in the sieve of Messrs. Brown, Jones, and Robinson, articled clerks, or junior partners. So great was Mr. Weston Vallory's power of dispatching business, so rapid his comprehension of every legal entanglement, every undeveloped yearning of the client's mind, that the junior partners found themselves reduced for the most part to drawing up small agreements, filling in contracts that Weston had skeletoned, writing insignificant letters, and such small details. Weston held the business in the palm of his hand, and yet he was able to attend his cousin's 'at homes,' and escort her to classical matinées when Hubert Harcross was too busy. A man at his club asked him one day if he ever went to bed, to which Weston replied blandly, 'Sometimes, in the long vacation.'

He was at Ryde now, neat and dapper, with a freshness of complexion and general youthfulness of aspect, which many an idle young patrician, a stranger to intellectual labour and City smoke, might have envied.

'I don't know how you do it, Weston,' Mr. Harcross said to him, one wet afternoon when they were weatherbound in the pretty drawing-room which looked across a sloping lawn to the sea. 'You must have some elixir, I think. Do you drink the blood of innocent young children, or do you wrap yourself in the skin of a newly-flayed ape occasionally, or by what other mediæval nostrum do you preserve that Hylas-like appearance of yours?'

'Do you really think I'm looking well?' inquired Weston, with his placid smile. 'My specific is of the simplest order, I assure you. I don't gorge myself as some men do. I never drink any wine but Amontillado. I lunch on a biscuit and a bottle of soda-water. I have my clothes made by the best men in London, and I make a point of taking life easily. I am like that citizen of London, *who got out of bed one night when half the streets of the city*

were being consumed in a general conflagration, and after ascertaining that the fire must burn three hours before it reached him, went quietly back to his roost, and finished his night's rest. I never anticipate trouble, and it must come home to me before I concern myself about it.'

'Would to God that I were master of your admirable philosophy!' said Mr. Harcross, with one of those little bursts of passion which sometimes set his wife wondering.

She looked up at him now from the pages of the last volume of fashionable literature, with astonished eyes.

'I hope your life is not so very disagreeable that you need to be sustained by philosophy, Hubert,' she said, in her coldest tones.

'My dear Augusta, what can be better than my life? and is it not the very existence that any sensible man would choose for himself? A little heaven here below, which many a man dreams of for years, labouring unavailingly, and never enters. How thankful, then, should I be for the magic pass which has admitted me within the gates of that earthly paradise! But, you see, there are clouds on the sunniest day, and I have my hours of shadow.'

'You certainly have not the gift of high spirits,' replied Augusta, 'except in society.'

'Can a bottle of champagne go on effervescing for ever?' asked Mr. Harcross: 'you may goad it into a factitious sparkle with a sip of bread, but what flat stuff it is after that transient resuscitation! Society asks too much of a man. He is perpetually being uncorked, perpetually called upon to sparkle, whereby his domestic condition becomes flatness. If you would let me take you through Spain this year, now, Augusta, you would find me the liveliest of companions. I am well posted up in all the Spanish pictures, and we should be away from the people you call your set. You can't imagine how I should revive under the genial influence of solitude; or if you would like a short sea voyage, we would go to St. Michael's and see the oranges growing.'

'What preposterous propositions, Hubert! You have heard a hundred times that there is not an hotel in Spain fit for a lady to enter. Don't you remember that story of the innkeeper, who was also a cobbler by trade, and who made an omelet in his dirty leather apron? Imagine my having to eat omelets made in leather aprons! Besides, you know very well that I have promised to go to the Clevedons on the fifteenth of August. Sir Francis Clevedon's birthday is the twenty-ninth; and there is to be a luncheon in the park, and a ball in the evening, and a fête for the tenantry and poor people, and so on.'

'A failure, no doubt,' said Mr. Harcross in his dreariest way; 'those elaborate inventions, those bringing together of gentle and simple, a double debt contrived to pay, always result in a fiasco.'

Cannot Sir Francis keep his birthday—the idea of a man keeping his birthday!—without our assistance? I don't care about going to Clevedon.'

'I cannot understand what mysterious objection you can have to this visit,' exclaimed Mrs. Harcross with evident displeasure. 'One would really suppose you had some association with the neighbourhood—either so pleasant that you do not care to revisit the place under altered circumstances, or so painful that you cannot endure to renew your acquaintance with it.'

Mr. Harcross frowned, and glanced at Weston, wondering whether this hint of suspicion arose from any suggestion of his.

'I have no mysterious objection to Clevedon,' he said; 'and of course if you make such a point of it, I shall go. I have never refused any request of yours that I had the power to comply with. But I tell you again that I hate other people's houses. When I have a holiday—and heaven knows my holidays are few and far apart—I like to live my own life, not to be awakened at half-past seven in the morning by the bruit of somebody else's gong, nor to find my host swelling with a sense of outrage because I was not down in time to hear him read family prayers. When the season is over, I languish for scenes remote from West-end man. I should like to take you to Algeria, and scrape acquaintance with the Moors. I should like to charter a ship and sail away to the Arctic seas, if there were time enough for such a voyage. Anything rather than Belgravia, and Tyburnia, and Kensingtonia out of town.'

'I am sorry that the duties of civilised existence will not permit us to go to the North Pole,' replied Mrs. Harcross with a little scornful laugh; 'but, you see, if you do not value friendship, I do—and I should be very sorry to disappoint Georgie Clevedon. Poor child! it is such a new thing for her to be mistress of a great house like Clevedon, and I have promised to give her a good deal of advice about the management of her household.'

'What! Do *you* know anything about that science?' asked Hubert incredulously. 'Have you ever stooped to such petty details I thought Fluman and Mrs. Candy managed everything.'

'How stupid you are, Hubert! Of course I am not my own housekeeper, if that's what you mean. I never interfered with anything of that kind in my life; no woman dare do it who hopes to hold any position in society. Imagine one's mind being distracted by a question of dinner. With papa, I made it a point never to find fault with a servant. If they did not suit, they were dismissed; and the housekeeper had full authority. "I never question anything you do," I said; "and in return you must never disturb me by so much as a hint of household annoyances."'

'In that case, would it not be better to send Mrs. Candy to Clevedon? She would be best able to advise Lady Clevedon.'

‘You surely don’t suppose that Georgina Clevedon wishes to be advised about soups or jellies, or housemaids’ wages, or soap and candles. I am going to put her in the way of taking her position in the county.’

‘But, my dear, do you know anything about counties?’

‘I know society,’ replied Augusta with dignity. ‘Society in Kent is the same thing as society in Mastodon-crescent.’

‘Unhappily, yes,’ cried Mr. Harcross with a faint groan. ‘It was said that the printing-press had driven away Robin Goodfellow and the fairies; and I fancy that the railway system has, in the same manner, banished all individuality. There is no such thing as a country gentleman. If Sir Roger de Coverley were alive now, who would not rejoice to visit him? And there would be some fun in spending a week with Squire Western; the fellow was at least racy.’

‘Then I am to understand that you will go with me to Clevedon, I suppose,’ said Augusta, after a pause, during which she had returned to her book, and Mr. Harcross to the contemplation of the rain-drops chasing one another down the plate-glass window, or the leaden sea beyond. Weston stood with his back to the chimney-piece, pretending to read the *Times*. This discussion about Clevedon was particularly interesting to him, and he became more and more inclined to think that Mr. Walgrave’s visit to the Kentish farmhouse was associated with some episode worth his knowing.

‘I will go, of course, if you really wish me to go. It cannot signify very much where I spend the last weeks in August.’

‘We need not stay longer than a fortnight at most,’ said Mrs. Harcross graciously, evidently softened by this concession. ‘And then, if you really care about the Continent, I shall be happy to go anywhere you please.’

‘Even to the North Pole,’ Mr. Harcross observed, with a smile. ‘We could hardly be a colder couple if we spent our lives there,’ he said to himself afterwards.

‘Weston is invited,’ continued Mrs. Harcross,—‘Sir Francis asked him when they met in the square. Papa was asked too, but, with his gout, he prefers remaining quietly here. I don’t think there’ll be a very large party staying in the house, for Sir Francis has few old friends in England, and of course Georgie does not wish to crowd the house with her people.’

It was settled, therefore, that Hubert Harcross should visit Clevedon; should eat, drink, and be merry in the place where he had spent that one idly happy summer day—in a place that was associated with the dead. He thought of the room with the oriel window, the room where he had told Grace Redmayne his fatal secret, where he had held her in his arms for the first time. He wondered

how that room would look — changed or the same — and how he should feel when he looked upon it.

For a long time after that hideous November day, when she sank dead at his feet, he had lived in constant apprehension of some encounter with Grace Redmayne's kindred. But nothing had come of this dread except a visit from John Wort, who had accused him straightly enough of having tempted the girl away, and to whom he had deliberately lied. So, little by little, his fears had worn themselves out. He had heard of the migration of Mrs. James and her family, heard that the old farmhouse was tenantless, and believed himself tolerably secure from the evil consequences of his sin. But notwithstanding his sense of security, nothing could have been more repellent to him than the idea of this visit. It was only from the fear of awakening suspicion in the mind of his wife that he consented to go. Had he been asked what it was he dreaded, or why he, who was not a man prone to sentimentality, should so shrink from looking once more on that familiar scene, his explanation must have been of the vaguest. He only knew that he did shrink from this visit, and that it was against his own judgment he consented to go to Clevedon.

'If there is any danger for me in that neighbourhood — danger of scandal or unpleasantness of any kind — I am running into the teeth of it,' he said to himself; 'but I hardly think there can be. The whole family are in Australia, and Brierwood farmhouse shut up. Poor old house, where I first learnt that my heart was something more than a force-pump to assist the circulation of the blood. Poor old garden, where I was so foolishly happy.'

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

SIR FRANCIS and Lady Clevedon left the Swiss mountains and valleys early in August, and came to their Kentish home, desperately in love with each other, and altogether a most foolishly devoted couple, as Sibyl Clevedon informed them after a day or two spent in their society.

'You really do flirt abominably,' she said, 'and I don't think I shall be able to stand it, if things are always to go on in this way. My existence here will be a perpetual state of doing gooseberry. Don't you think you might find some eligible person to fall in love with me, Frank; so that I may set up a rival business? The present state of affairs is awfully slow.'

Not slow for the principals, however, to whom life just now seemed a summer holiday. The young couple certainly made the most of that happy week of perfect liberty which preceded the arrival of their visitors. They wandered in the park all through the sultry summer morning, exploring their territory like a married



Robinson Crusoe and his wife, 'running about,' as Percy Shelley's wife called it, when she spoke of herself and her boy-husband in their Welsh cottage. They rode about the surrounding villages, made themselves familiar with the boundaries of the estate, and formed the acquaintance of numerous small tenants and farm labourers, all of whom wanted something done, and took advantage of Sir Francis Clevedon's defenceless state in a ruthless manner. John Wort rated his master soundly for such folly.

'If you go giving 'em everything they ask,' he said, 'you may as well divide your estate among 'em at once, and go and be a Plymouth Brother. It'll come to the same thing; for I'm blest if ever you'll get sixpence a year out of the property, if you listen to your tenants' whims and fancies. I never give 'em anything; that's my rule. "Don't you like the place?" I ask, if they come whining to me. "Because if you don't, you've got your remedy next quarter-day. There isn't an acre of land or a house on the estate that I couldn't let over your heads three deep; so if you want to better yourselves in some other direction, pray don't stop out of politeness to me." That generally brings them to their senses. But of course, if the proprietor goes tampering with the tenants, I'm done. Once give 'em anything, and they'll never leave off asking; and if you begin by giving inches, you'll find yourself let in for ells before you know where you are.'

Sir Francis looked penitent, and referred to a dainty little notebook of Georgie's with a gruesome countenance.

'I'm afraid I committed myself to a new chimney or two, and a little improvement in the way of drain pipes, where I found the cottages hardly as sweet as Breidenbach's shop; and here's a case where I think something inexpensive in the shape of a stable would be an actual charity, for the family have a donkey which lives with them in their common sitting-room—uncomfortable for the donkey, which must find himself hustled about when the family are busy, and perhaps a check on the freedom of conversation; for who can tell what a donkey may or may not understand? My wife pleaded piteously for the brute. I'm afraid her compassion went to the donkey rather than to the family who were compelled to have him in their parlour. Here's an oven, I see, to which I certainly did pledge myself, at the request of a woman whose cottage was a perfect model of cleanliness. And if she had an oven she could give her old man a bit of pie for his supper, or a toad-in-the-hole for his dinner. What is a toad-in-the-hole, by the bye? I've heard of viper broth being given by the Italians to people in extremity, but a toad is a new idea. Come, Wort, be philanthropic, and redeem all my promises without any more grumbling. I daresay I've been a fool, but you see a man does not get married many times in his life, and may be excused a little weakness on such an occasion.'

'Of course, if you say I'm to do these things, Sir Francis must do them,' replied John Wort, with the sigh of resignation. 'It isn't my place to make objections. I suppose you know that you've let yourself in for a couple of hundred pounds, at the least.'

'We'll save the money somehow, Wort, depend upon it,' answered the delinquent gaily. 'You have no idea what a financier I am. Lady Clevedon and I were planning a Swiss cottage in the loveliest corner of the park to-day—a sequestered nook where we might spend our afternoons when we wanted to be alone, in order that our servants might tell people we were not at home without outraging their own moral sense. We'll defer the building of our Swiss cottage, and that will balance matters.'

'This here feet-shampeter will cost no end of money, I reckon,' observed the unappeasable steward, who, conscious of having made the shipwrecked estate sea-worthy by his own exertions, was inclined to consider that he had a prescriptive right to grumble.

'O, dear no; it will be the simplest thing in the world. Besides, that's out of your jurisdiction, you know, Wort; a mere domestic expense.'

'I know that, Sir Francis. I know there ain't many masters as would let me speak that free as I do to you. But, you see, I've worked hard for the property, and it's almost as near and dear to me as if it was an only child; and I don't want to see you ruin yourself, as Sir Lucas did. Shampeters was in his line, you know, sir.'

'Don't alarm yourself, Wort, I've graduated in the science of economy. Remember what I lived on abroad. And you don't know what a treasure of a wife I have secured. There'll be no extravagance in this household, depend upon it. O, by the way, Wort, if you're not in a hurry this morning, I should like to ask you a question.'

'My time is your time, Sir Francis.'

'Sit down, then, and make yourself comfortable. I'll ring for some sherry and soda. I've been looking over the maps of the estate, and the family history, intermarriages of great-uncles and great-aunts, ramifications of cousins, and so on; and I find there's a small estate my father got rid of about seven years before I was born, a place I never heard of in my life, called Ravenhurst. It seems to have been a farm of about three hundred acres, with a house of some importance upon it. I wonder I never heard my father speak of it.'

'I don't,' said Mr. Wort decisively.

'But why not?'

'Does a man ever care to talk about a thing he has parted with?' asked the steward philosophically, as he removed the wire from a soda-water bottle. 'It's always a sore subject.'

‘But how did my father come to sell this Ravenhurst estate?’ inquired Sir Francis. ‘Wasn’t it in the entail.’

‘No, sir; it was your grandmother’s property. She was an heiress, you know, a Miss Blandford, only daughter of Colonel Blandford, who made no end of money in the *Canartic*—what ever that may be—and bought a good deal of land hereabouts.’

‘Humph! Curious I should never have heard of the estate. My father’s difficulties had begun, I suppose, when he sold it?’

‘Well, yes, sir. He didn’t sell it without a strong necessity.’

‘And did his creditors get all the money?’

‘Not the common run of his creditors,’ replied Mr. Wort, who had a thoughtful air, and seemed indisposed to be communicative.

‘They didn’t touch a penny. It was a debt of honour, which Sir Lucas settled with the price of Ravenhurst.’

‘Ah, that fatal play! Fox, and that card-playing set, who made it the fashion for a man to ruin himself, had a great deal to answer for. Who bought the estate?’

‘A Mr. Quinlan, a gentleman farmer, whose property it joined; but the land was sold again at his death. Ravenhurst has been through other hands since Sir Lucas sold it; seven-and-thirty years ago, you see, sir. It belongs to a retired builder now, who has divided it into three small farms, and sold the frontages for building ground.’

Sir Francis was satisfied. It was strange, certainly, that his father had never mentioned Ravenhurst, and yet like his father to have avoided an unpleasant topic. He put the subject out of his mind. Ravenhurst was gone from him and his heirs for ever. He had not the insatiable hunger for land which possesses some men. It was hard upon the poor old Colonel, who had fought, and possibly plundered, in the Carnatic, that his estate should have been thus lightly disposed of, but it was scarcely a hardship for Sir Francis.

That idle happy week with his young wife seemed the briefest of his existence: one long ride through shadowy woods and sunny green lanes, where the hedges were full of flowers; one lazy morning, dreaming under the chestnuts in the park; one tranquil evening, made musical by two sweet girlish voices blended in old familiar melodies such as the heart of man loveth.

They spent the peaceful evenings of this initiatory week in Georgie’s morning room, that very chamber with the oriel window in which Grace Redmayne’s girlish form had first been folded in a lover’s arms, that room which in Hubert Walgrave’s memory held a place as solemn as a mortuary chapel. The furniture had not been changed; the old Indian cabinets—Bombay blackwood—and Poonah desks and cardracks, which had been good enough for Colonel Blandford’s daughter, the heiress of spoils from the Carnatic, were good enough for Georgie. A new Persian carpet, with new blue silk

window-curtains, and blue silk covers for the antiquated chairs and sofas; a dainty maple-wood cottage piano in a snug recess by the fireplace; a huge cage of Australian birds, and a prettily carved ivory frame, containing all the photographic portraits that had ever been taken of Francis Clevedon—from the boy at a German University to the Master of Clevedon Park: such trifles as these had sufficed to make the room perfect in the eyes of Georgie.

The fifteenth of August—the day upon which their guests were to arrive—came too swiftly for the wedded lovers.

‘Frankie, do you know I’m afraid I hate visitors?’ Georgie said, with a solemn face expressive of profound self-abasement, as she stood by her husband’s side at an open window in the square parlour in the early summer morning.

‘What a horrible confession for the head of a county family! And yet you were anxious that Mrs. Harcross should come to you, Georgie.’

‘Was I, Frank? Mrs. Harcross! Well, you know, Mrs. Harcross was very good to me about my trousseau. You’ve no idea what trouble she took. But for her you might have had such a dowdy wife. She said Aunt Chowder’s notions were a quarter of a century old.’

‘I don’t think it would have disturbed my peace of mind very much, Georgie, if that calamity had occurred. I should love you just as well if you had only one faded gown—like Enid. Indeed, I have serious thoughts of putting you to the test, as that young lady was tested; or taking a leaf out of the *Decameron*, and making a modern Grisel of you. I wonder how you would come through that kind of furnace.’

‘You can’t say I’m wanting in fortitude, Frank, when I parted with Pedro for your sake. But don’t let’s be silly, please. I want to talk very seriously.’

‘I am all attention.’

‘No, you’re not, sir; you’re staring out of the window with all your might.’

‘Look at the shadows of the chestnuts, Georgie, and that group of deer; don’t you think those are worth staring at?’

‘Yes, of course; but I want you to talk of the people who are coming to-day. First and foremost, there is Aunt Chowder. I had a tremendous discussion about the rooms with Mrs. Mixer, and I really thought we never should settle things so as not to offend any one. Aunt Chowder is to have the yellow room, with the little dressing-room, which by rights belongs to the blue room; but that we give to a bachelor—Mr. Weston Vallory—and he can do without a dressing-room.’

‘Weston Vallory!’ exclaimed Sir Francis, with a wry face. ‘Did we ask that snob?’

‘Why, Frank, you know you invited him yourself!’

‘I know nothing about it, my dear. A man who is going to be married may be expected to be a little off his head. I suppose I did ask the fellow in some expansive moment.’

‘Don’t you like him, dear?’

‘Do I like cobras, or skunks, or musk-rats, or any other unclean things? I should think Weston Vallory was of the musk-rat species; and that if he ran across the bottles in my cellar, he’d poison the wine inside them: *ça sent le snob*.’

‘How can you be so unjust, Frank? Mrs. Harcross told me that her cousin is a most good-natured man. He is quite devoted to her.’

‘Yes; and hates her husband with all the venom of a small creature. I tell you, Georgie, Weston Vallory belongs to the venomous tribes. I was a fool to invite the two men together. However, I suppose in good society one must have people who hate each other. Go on with your list, my dear.’

‘The tapestry-room for the Harcrosses,’ said Georgie, counting on her fingers; ‘the room the prince slept in for General Cheviot and his wife; the oak room for your friend Captain Hardwood; the cedar room for my friends the Miss Stalmans; and one of the best rooms on the top story for your learned friend Mr. M’Gall, the Scotchman who writes for all the reviews. I think that’s all. Papa is to be with us every day; but he won’t sleep away from the bungalow, you know, if he can possibly help it, for fear there should be a fire in the night, and all the animals should be burnt.’

‘Like Barnum’s Museum,’ said Sir Francis irreverently.

Although Georgie was inclined to lament the advent of her visitors, it was by no means an unpleasant thing to receive them, and to feel the full force of her position as mistress of Clevedon brought home to her by their presence. She did the honours of the old house nobly, escorted her lady guests through the rooms and galleries, showing them the various points of attraction—the family pictures, the music-room with the new concert-grand, the billiard-room with its two vast tables, the spacious library, sustained in the centre by three massive porphyry columns—a room which had been added by Sir Lucas Clevedon’s father. Mr. and Mrs. Harcross were the last to arrive. Their luggage had come down by an early train with the ruck of the visitors, three monster trunks that might have held an Indian outfit, with Mrs. Harcross’s name and London address engraved upon a brass plate on each, and a modest portmanteau or two belonging to Mr. Harcross. Tullion had brought these and the inevitable travelling-bag, now more gorgeous than of old, being in fact a wedding present, silver-gilt tops to all the jars and bottles, with Mrs. Harcross’s monogram in pink coral on everything, from the scent-bottles to the hair-brushes. The

Harcrosses themselves came by an express that brought them Tunbridge late in the afternoon; so that Weston Vallory had been installed some time, and was making himself agreeable at a five o'clock tea in the garden when his cousin and her husband arrived.

Augusta insisted on going to her friend at once when she heard that Lady Clevedon was in the garden. She was not a person whose toilet was ever disordered by travelling, and all the puffing and flouncings of her gray silk dress seemed as fresh as when it left the hands of her milliner. So, conscious of her fitness to meet the gaze of society, she begged to be shown at once to the garden and followed the butler across the great hall and along a passage leading to the garden door, with Hubert Harcross in her train.

The oak-panelled passage was just a little dark, and a flood of summer sunlight streamed in at the opening of the door. Was it this sudden burst of light that dazed Mr. Harcross, as he stood on the threshold of the house for a moment, looking out at the garden?

It was the garden in which Grace and he had wandered through that thoughtless summer afternoon. How well he remembered it! The arches garlanded with roses and honeysuckle, the passion-flowers, the stone basin of gold fish, where no fish had been when he last saw it, only shallow stagnant water covered with duckweed. Poor old neglected place! They had trimmed and improved everything, of course, but not with an inexorable hand. The garden still belonged to the old world, the sweet-scented flow still grew in a wild profusion; nor had the form of beds or grassplots been altered. In the midst of his pain, which was of the sharpest kind, he felt glad to see that the place was so little changed.

Lady Clevedon was pouring out tea in the very arbour where Mr. and Mrs. James Redmayne and Mr. Wort had sipped their morning punch with the old butler and his wife. There were a few garden seats scattered round the bower, and on one of these Weston Vallory was balancing himself, making himself agreeable after his kind. Sir Francis was absent, pleasantly engaged in showing the stable to his friend, Captain Hardwood.

'What a magnificent woman!' said Mr. M'Gall, the gentleman who wrote for all the reviews, looking up from a meditative cup of tea as Mrs. Harcross came along the gravel path, her glistening gray dress and dainty pink bonnet resplendent in the sunshine. 'Is that one of your Kentish friends, Lady Clevedon?'

'No, that is my friend Mrs. Harcross.'

'What! the wife of Harcross the barrister? I've met him once or twice. O, here he comes in the background, looking rather fagged. He's said to work as hard as any man in London.'

Mr. Harcross performed his share of all the greetings; gave the ends of his fingers to Weston, was presented to General Chevi-



and so on, and said all that could have been expected of him under the circumstances. But he looked wan and haggard in the sunshine, and was glad to drop into a chair by Georgie's tea-tray presently, after a little talk with the General.

'You look so tired, Mr. Harcross,' Lady Clevedon said compassionately, thinking that her husband might come to look like this some day, worn and weary, and with an air of premature age; 'I hope the journey was not very fatiguing.'

'No. Augusta did not seem to feel it at all; but I suppose I am growing old and nervous, and that the vibration affects me more than it did a few years ago. I worked rather hard in the season, and since then I have been yachting a little; and I daresay that sort of thing, with a sixty-ton yacht on one's mind, is not so complete a rest as a professional man requires.'

'I should think not,' cried Georgie; 'and you have been at the Isle of Wight, yachting. How I envy you your yacht!'

'And how I envy you—'

'What, Mr. Harcross? What can such a successful man as you are find to envy in any one's fate?'

'A great many things. Your youth, to begin with, and the freshness that belongs to it—the power to envy anybody anything. Do you know, I sometimes look round the world, and wonder whether there is anything in it I should care to have if the mere act of wishing would secure it for me; and the answer is doubtful.'

'That means that your life is so full already. You have fame, fortune, a charming wife. Is there anything more you could wish for?'

'Can't you imagine something? Children, for instance—you remember what Wordsworth says about a child? But I *don't* wish for those. I don't feel myself the sort of man who ought to have them.'

He said all this carelessly enough, yet with a certain earnestness beneath that outward lightness. He had been drawn on to speak more unreservedly than his wont by something sympathetic in Georgie's face and manner. 'She is the kind of woman a man might trust,' he said to himself. 'I like that firm mouth and rounded chin, which give such character to the sparkling face. I like the tone of her voice and the touch of her hand.'

Mrs. Harcross had become the centre of a circle by this time: the elderly gray-bearded General prostrating himself in the dust before her, stricken down by her beauty; while his wife conversed apart with the eldest Miss Stalman, on the alarming tendencies of the English Church, undisturbed by the pangs of jealousy. The stable clock struck seven while the party were still pleasantly engaged, and the ladies moved off to dress for the eight-o'clock dinner, leaving the gentlemen to contaminate the first cool zephyrs of evening with the odour of premature cigars during the quarter of an hour which they could safely spare from the labours of the toilet.

The first dinner at Clevedon was a success. Cook and house-keeper, butler and subordinates, had nerved themselves for a grand struggle. Now or never the new establishment was to show what it was worth. 'Don't talk to me about your Regency dinners, Mr. Moles,' the modern butler had said to his ancient brother, in the expansiveness of social intercourse. 'What elegance or artistical effect could there have been about a dinner in those days, when every blessed thing was put upon the table?'

'I don't know about the table, Mr. Mumby,' said the ancient butler, with an offended air; 'Sir Lucas's platto was as fine a sight as you'd wish to lay your eyes on—fourteen feet long, with gadroon edges, and ramping lions for supporters at all the corners; and our silver covers and side-dishes took three men a week to clean before they come to the state of perfection as I liked to see. As for covers and side-dishes nowadays, with this mean sneaking way of handing everything round, you might as well be without 'em, for all the credit they do you. I'm past my time, I dessay, Mr. Mumby, and I'm glad of it, when I see the present low-lived way of doing things — Why, one of our dinners would have made six of yours in solid butcher's meat; and where you've one side-dish in your menu, we had half-a-dozen.'

'I don't know what you mean by side-dishes, Mr. Moles,' said the modern domestic; 'we have nothing but hongtrays and hongtraymays.'

The inaugurative dinner was a success. Tristram Moles was allowed to peep into the dining-room before the banquet, a weak feeble figure amid all that glow of colour and sparkle of glass under the soft light of waxen tapers. Pale as a ghost revisiting the scenes of its earthly joys, he gazed upon the glittering board with a faint approving smile, and confessed that it was nicely arranged —

'I never did hold with flowers on a dinner-table,' he said, shaking his head at the pyramids of rare hothouse blossoms, and the dwarf forest of fern and geranium reflected in the crystal plateau; 'but if you must have 'em, I allow you've arranged 'em tastily. It's all very pretty, Mr. Mumby, like a young lady's counter at a fancy fair; but I'm an old man, and I shall go down to my grave with the opinion that your top and bottom and your six side-dishes is the best decoration for your dinner-table.' Thus, with a deprecating shrug and a mournful survey of the frivolous board, Mr. Moles having come like a shadow, so departed.

The dinner, as well as being a success from a gastronomic point of view—there was a parmesan soufflé towards the end of the feast, which the eldest Miss Stalman, who was gifted with an epicurean taste, dreamt of—was a social triumph. The hum and rattle of conversation never ceased; there were no awkward pauses, in which people simultaneously awake to the discovery that no one is talking, till

**the** most audacious member of the circle plunges into the gulf of silence **with** some inane remark, which being gratefully received by host or hostess, bridges the dreary chasm, and leads the way to pastures **new**. To-night at Clevedon there were plenty of good talkers. General Cheviot and Colonel Davenant helped and sustained each **other**, yet were judiciously placed far enough apart to have each his **auditory**. The two Miss Stalmans were of the agreeable-rattle species : **could** talk croquet or theology, fine art, horses, or botany with equal **facility** ; could draw out the dullest neighbour and entangle the **coldest** cavalier in the meshes of one of those confidential conversations about nothing particular, which, seen from a little distance, look **like** flirtation of the deepest dye.

In such a party, if Mr. Harcross had chosen to eat his dinner in comparative silence, he might have done so with impunity. There **were** plenty of people to talk ; and Georgie's aunt, Mrs. Chowder, **whom** he took in to dinner, was not exacting so long as the ministering spirits of the banquet brought her the nicest entrées, and not **the** ruined walls of the vol-au-vents, or the legs of the chickens. 'I can't dine without currie,' she told her neighbour confidentially, 'and I can't dine without bitter beer. I know it sounds dreadful ; **but** I was twenty years in India, and use is second nature, you know. I **don't** know whether you noticed it, but there was no grated cocoanut in that currie. I must give Georgina's cook poor dear Chowder's recipe ; a copy of it, that is to say. The original document **is** in his own handwriting, and I keep it among the letters he wrote **me** when I came home for my health.'

While Mrs. Chowder enjoyed her dinner, however, Mr. Harcross did not abandon himself to silence. On the contrary, he **went** in for a triumph and achieved it, saying some of his best and **bitterest** things, to the delight of an admiring circle, talking much **more** than usual ; not hanging back, and watching his opportunity to **flash** in upon the talk with speech as keen as a sword-thrust, after **the** manner of some dinner-table wits, but making all the talk at **his** end of the table, and sustaining it with unabated vigour.

Weston Vallory, who was seated at Augusta's left hand, was not **slow** to observe this extreme vivacity.

'How lively your husband is to-night !' he said to Mrs. Harcross : 'he has almost a feverish air.'

'I suppose he wishes to make himself agreeable to our friends,' Augusta answered, in her chilling way, but with a little suspicious glance across the table towards her husband nevertheless. 'He is **not** generally dull in society,' she added.

'O, dear no ; on the contrary, he is a man who seems created to **shine** in society. It's a pity that type of man always seems to lose a little in the domestic circle.'

Augusta flashed one of her sternest glances upon her cousin ;

but he was as much accustomed to the angry flash of those brilliant hazel eyes as she was to this kind of malicious insinuation against her husband.

‘I don’t know what you mean by losing in the domestic circle,’ she said stiffly; ‘I never find Hubert at a loss for conversation at home.’

‘Really now,’ said Weston, with his insolent incredulous air, ‘I should have thought that even Canning or Sydney Smith must have been rather bad company at home. A man of that kind wants such a dinner as this to develop his powers. Though, by the bye there really is *no one* here, and that’s why I felt surprised by Harcross’s excessive vivacity. I can’t see the source of his inspiration. What can it matter to him whether those girls in blue think him a wit or a dullard; or that old Indian General, or the stout party in green satin—an aunt of the house, I believe? What *kudos* can he get from amusing all these nobodies?’

‘It is just possible that he may wish to please *my* friends,’ replied Augusta, with dignity. ‘You cannot suppose that a man in his position must always have a motive for being agreeable. He is not upon his promotion.’

‘No, he is one of those infernal lucky fellows who have only to open their mouths for manna to fall into them.’

‘He has worked harder than most men, and has more talent than most men,’ Weston. ‘I don’t see that there is any luck in the case.’

‘Don’t you? Was there no luck in marrying you? What title distinguishes him from the ruck of mankind, that should entitle him to such a prize as he secured when he won you? How provokingly devoted you are to the fellow, Augusta!’

‘Weston, I will not allow you to talk in that style.’

‘O, come now, Augusta; I’m sure I behave myself remarkably well, but a man can’t always be dumb. It provokes me past endurance sometimes to see you so fond of him.’

‘Indeed! I had supposed myself amongst the coldest of wives.’

‘Cold! Why, you blaze up like a volcano if one says a word against yonder demigod. He cannot do wrong in your sight. What I verily believe that if any awkward episode of his past life were to come to light, you’d accept the revelation as a matter of course, and go on adoring him.’

‘I really wish you would not use such absurd words, Weston—“demigod” and “adoration”! Of course I am attached to my husband. Our marriage was one of inclination, as you know, and Hubert’s conduct from first to last has been most conscientious and disinterested. With regard to his past life, I doubt if I have the slightest right to question that, although I should be naturally grieved to discover that he had ever been anything less than I believe him to be, a man of high moral character.’

‘Upon my word, Augusta, you are a model wife. But suppose **now**, during your engagement to him, at the very time when you **were** keeping company, as the maid-servants say, there had been **any** little episode—a rustic flirtation, for instance, which developed **into** something of a more serious character—how then?’

This time Mrs. Harcross grew suddenly pale even to the very **lips**.

‘I will never speak to you again, Weston,’ she said, without **raising** her voice in the least degree, ‘unless you immediately **apologise** for that shameful insinuation.’

‘My dear Augusta, I was only putting a case. I will beg your **pardon** a thousand times over, if you like. I had no idea of **offending** you.’

‘You always offend me when you talk of my husband. I request **that** for the future you will abstain from speaking of him.’

‘I expunge his name from my vocabulary. From this moment **he** shall be as sacred in my eyes as the Llama of Thibet, or those **nameless** goddesses whom the Greeks worshipped in fear and **trembling**. I could endure anything rather than your anger, **Augusta**.’

‘Then pray do not provoke it by any more silly speeches about **Hubert**. Lady Clevedon is rising; will you give me my fan, please? I **dropped** it just now. Thanks.’

Her colour had come back by this time. That insinuation of **Weston’s** was of course, like all the rest of his malicious speeches, **the** meaningless emanation of a jealous soul. She had grown accustomed to the idea that this cousin of hers should be thus bitter **upon** the subject of her marriage. She knew what a crushing disappointment that marriage had been to him, and was hardly inclined **to** be angry with him for being still devoted to her, heart and soul; **still** jealous of the winner. Where else, indeed, could she have **found** such faithful service, such unflagging zeal?

‘Poor Weston,’ she used to say to her confidantes, ‘he would **go** through fire and water for me.’

And through fire and water Weston Vallory was quite prepared **to** go, with one end and aim held steadily in view.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### ‘ON PLEASURE BENT.’

SUMMER skies and summer woods, quaint old gardens brimming over with roses, a fair supply of carriages and horses, a good cook, and a considerable proportion of youthful spirits, combined to make the little gathering at Clevedon a very pleasant business. There were plenty of show places and a sprinkling of interesting ruins in that fair garden of England; and Lady Clevedon’s visitors were

rarely at home for luncheon, but were to be found at that social hour either picnicking on the smooth turf in the chancel of a dilapidated abbey, or roughing it in the sanded best parlour of some rustic inn, or camping on the summit of a hill, with a Turneresque landscape spreading wide beneath, and melting into the blue sky beyond an opposite range of wooded hills twenty miles away.

Sir Francis Clevedon's horses, and such job-horses as were to be hired in the village of Kingsbury, had rather a hard time of it during these festivities, and may reasonably have wished themselves in any other state of life. Little rest had they in the gloomy, substantial old stables, in the spacious quadrangle, where pear-trees and yellow jasmine climbed over the dark red-brick walls, and a great clock clanged the hours, half-hours, and quarters, with a dissonant clang that outraged the summer quiet. As soon as the cheery, lounging breakfast was over, the morning papers read, and perhaps a stray game of billiards indulged in, while the ladies were dressing for the day's excursion, preparations for the start began on the broad gravel drive in front of the porch. Matrons were duly stowed into landau and barouche; maidens came tripping down the stone steps in riding-gear, with chimney-pot hats perched coquettishly on wonderful structures of puffed and plaited hair; adventurous spirits, eager to drive doubtful horses in tittuppy dog-carts, paused for the signal for departure; dogs barked, footmen and grooms ran to and fro, carrying shawls and sun umbrellas; ponderous baskets of comestibles were hung on to the heavier carriages; and at last, Georgie having mounted a mail-phaeton with her husband, in defiance of etiquette, the gay procession move merrily off at a dashing pace down the long avenue, whose glories have been somewhat thinned by Sir Lucas, but which is still a noble alley.

'I will drive with you, Frankie,' says the young wife, nestling under her husband's elbow. 'What a tall creature you are up there! I would sooner stay at home at once than sit and prose in that stuffy landau, while you rattled on a quarter of a mile before us, smoking and ha-ha-ha-ing with some horrid man. How is it men are always laughing when they are together? and what in goodness' name do they find to laugh at? They must be either very witty or very idiotic.'

'Not much of the first, I'm afraid, Georgie. Your wit never laughs, and doesn't often make other people laugh. His true province is to set them thinking. Of course I like to have you wit to me, Miss Crusoe' (this was a pet name, founded on his first remembrance of her), 'but don't you think you ought to be doing company with Mrs. Cheviot and Mrs. Harcross in the landau?'

'They're very comfortable without me, Frankie,' Georgina answers in a wheedling tone, getting a little closer to the driver's elbow. 'Augusta can get on with any one, in her grand way,



and there's auntie too; and they know we haven't been married long, dear, and perhaps they'll think it natural we should like to be together.'

'And of course by and by, when we've been married a little longer, we shall wish to be as far apart as possible,' replies Sir Francis, laughing; and away they go along the bright Kentish roads, where every hedgerow frames a new picture of sweet pastoral beauty, where every fresh turn of the road reveals a panorama that seems fairer than the last,—away they go by hill and valley, by woods and fields, as happy as the skylark carolling in the blue vault above them.

In all these agreeable excursions Mr. Harcross followed in his wife's train. He was never sulky or objective, never languished to stay behind to play billiards or read novels in the dim old library, or smoke perpetual cigars among the roses,—he was only supremely indifferent. The small world of Clevedon considered him a model husband. He was always polite and attentive to his wife when occasion called for politeness on his part, brought her shawls and parasols, handed her in and out of carriages, but all without any ill-advised *empressement* which might have reminded people that he had married a fortune. By fits and starts he chose to be brilliant, but at other times was the most silent of the party. People accepted the taciturn humour as natural in a professional man of his standing.

'That fellow Harcross does no end of hard thinking, Joe,' one of the young men of the party observed to his compeer; 'can't make out how he does it. Did you ever try to think, Joey?'

'Yes, once,' answered Joseph gravely: 'I tried to make a safe book for the Derby, and did a lot of thinking over it; but the figures wouldn't come right, and yet they ought. Now, look here, Treby; if you lay a hundred to ten against eleven horses, only one of the eleven can win, you know, and you can't lose anything. If none of 'em win, you make a hundred and ten pounds. That's the secret of the colossal fortunes made by omnibus cads, and that sort of people.'

'Don't seem to see it,' replied Treby; 'I'd rather back the favourite for a place. It isn't such a strain upon one's intellect.'

Did Mr. Harcross enjoy life amidst that merry party, with all the verdure and freshness of English landscape about and around him, with young voices ringing in his ear, and young faces smiling upon him? Well, no; he rather suffered these pleasures as something that must be got through and endured somehow. Half the time his mind was away in dusty law-courts, or in the Lords committee-room. He could not enjoy the present moment as these people did. That breathless race which he had run for fortune had incapacitated him for holiday-making. It seemed such a foolish waste of time, this dawdling among broken arches, and champagne-

drinking at two o'clock in the day, the trivial jokes, the flirtation and meandering. While the rest were beguiled by such pettiness he strolled thoughtfully over the gravestones of mitred abbots, weighing his own life, pondering upon what he had won and what he had missed. The ruined abbey, whose aisle he paced, was somewhat suggestive of such contemplation; for it belonged to a law lord whose mansion stood a little way off, within sight of those ivy-covered buttresses.

'The monks who built and maintained this place seem a grander race than our law lords,' he said to himself, 'for they have left a finer monument to mark their existence than Thurlow or Brougham. After all, there is nothing like architecture if a man wants to be remembered when he is dust; and that was a pardonable weakness of the Pharaohs which made them go in for incalculable bricks and mortar.'

There were times, however, when Mr. Harcross was more socially inclined, and would even condescend to flirt a little, in a half-cynical way, with the prettiest Miss Stalman, who was disposed to adore him, and in little gushes of confidence to her sister deplored the fact of his marriage. In spite of his habit of retiring within himself occasionally, and withdrawing from the pleasures of the rest, he was eminently popular. First and foremost, because he was a man of mark in his profession, and people liked to be on such intimate terms with so distinguished a person; and secondly, because he talked well when he did choose to talk, and had the gift of at least seeming to know everything under the sun.

'You are so dreadfully clever, Mr. Harcross,' said the prettiest Miss Stalman, with a reverential look, after he had told her some legends of the monks who had tossed their censers and sung the masses under the vaulted roof that once had spanned those lofty walls. 'I think you must have read every book that was ever printed.'

'Not quite. Indeed I doubt if I have read as many books as you have. I am told some young ladies devour a three-volume novel in a day, and that, knocking off Sundays and an occasional saint's day, would make nine hundred volumes a year. Allow them seven years of novel-reading, and there you have six thousand three hundred volumes. I don't believe I've read so many as that. But I thought, as we were to lunch in the cloisters, every one would be eager to know something about the abbey; so I looked it up in the history of Kent while you ladies were dressing.'

'It is so nice to be with some one who knows all about gothic architecture,' murmured Miss Stalman, with a faint sigh. 'My sympathies are with everything mediæval.'

Several people at Clevedon had observed the likeness between Mr. Harcross and his host. They might have been brothers or first-

cousins, people said, and were more like each other than many men so related. Hubert Harcross's type of face was to be seen in ever so many of the Clevedon portraits, as Weston Vallory, the all-seeing, pointed out one wet morning when the visitors were confined to the house, and tramped the galleries restlessly in their search for amusement.

'It's really a singular fact, that likeness,' he said; 'especially as my friend Harcross's face is by no means a common one. There's that slight projection of the under lip, for instance, which gives what some people call a cynical expression to the mouth—that's a regular Clevedon mark. You see it in the chief-justice yonder, with the Ramilies wig, and in the old colonel of dragoons over there. Very curious, these accidental resemblances.'

There was a full-length portrait of Sir Lucas in the drawing-room, by Lawrence—rather an effeminate figure, in the famous Regency swallow-tail coat and high stock—and in this picture also the likeness between the Clevedons and Mr. Harcross was obvious. All that made the strength of Hubert's face was wanting in the spendthrift's thoughtless countenance; but the likeness was not the less palpable.

'You are like what my father would have been if he had ever learned to think,' said Sir Francis; 'but he never did. Even misfortune could not teach him that lesson. He only acquired the art of grumbling.'

'Ye shall know them by their fruits,' said Mr. Harcross sententiously. 'Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?'

Sir Francis looked at him wonderingly for a moment, but said nothing; whereupon somebody began to criticise the fashionable attire of the year '20, and the conversation drifted into another channel.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

'AND ONE WITH ME I COULD NOT DEEM YOU.'

MR. HARCROSS was alone in the picture gallery that rainy August afternoon. There was a grand billiard match going on downstairs, a fight for the championship of Clevedon, between Captain Hardwood and Mr. M'Gall, the Scottish reviewer, and all the youth and sprightliness of Clevedon, made sprightlier by a luncheon which had been prolonged to double its usual length on account of the dismal weather, was assembled to witness the struggle. Mr. Harcross could hear the babble and laughter as he paced the long gallery, from whose panelled wall departed Clevedons seemed to scowl upon him in the doubtful light. There had been a talk of the day improving after luncheon, and barometers had been tapped

inquiringly by dainty knuckles ; but the dense gray sky had grown grayer and more leaden, and the steady rain of the morning had only become a little heavier in the afternoon. There was more wind now than there had been in the morning, and a stormy gust drove the rain against the windows every now and then, and the ancient sashes rattled like the ports of a ship at sea. The long picture gallery, cheerful enough on a sunny day, when the landscape outside the windows was a thing of beauty, looked somewhat blank and dismal this afternoon. There was a wide fireplace at each end of the room, with spindle-legged silver tongs and shovel chained to the wall of the chimneypiece : the stately apartment would have been all the better even on this August day for a couple of blazing fires. Mr. Harcross shivered once or twice during his monotonous promenade ; but though there were plenty of cheerful rooms in the house, he chose to occupy this. He had borne the morning well enough—had played chess with Mrs. Cheviot, had flirted with the pretty Miss Stalman, had found some rare old volumes in the library, and produced and explained them for the edification of the elder and more intellectual Miss Stalman ; had done all that a man could do, weather-bound in another man's country-house, to maintain his popularity. But the afternoon had found him exhausted. His professional career had not adapted him for the endurance of ten hours' labour in this line. He required to be sustained by some keener interest than was to be found in this trifling kind of existence. He could find perpetual mental refreshment in his briefs, dull and commonplace as they might seem to an outsider. There was always some interesting technicality, some legal knot to be untied by his dexterous hand, some subtle pitfall to be planned for the opposite side. But in this company-life, this little colony of guests thrown together at random, like shipwrecked strangers on a desert island, pretending to be congenial and perpetually amused, he could find neither interest nor delight.

He was walking to and fro in a dreary way, letting his idle thoughts wander where they would, when the door at the end of the gallery opened and he heard the rustling of a silk dress. Perhaps no one else of his acquaintance ever wore such rich silk or such long trains as Augusta, or it may have been a mere fancy on his part ; but he always imagined that her garments had a peculiar rustle, and he looked up now, startled by the familiar sound, to find that he had not been deceived. It was his wife who had opened the door.

She came towards him slowly, with a rigid look in her face, that hardly promised a pleasant encounter.

‘ The idea of your being here, Hubert, all by yourself ! ’

‘ Why should I not be here, Augusta, and by myself, for once in a way ? Have I not been living in public long enough to satisfy

even your views of one's duty to society? I'm rather glad to stretch my legs here, and think my own thoughts and do a little yawning. If you knew how often I've languished for a comfortable yawn lately!'

'What nonsense, Hubert!' Mrs. Harcross exclaimed, with vexation. 'I've been looking for you all over the house. Every one else is in the billiard-room.'

'Then I am sure I cannot be missed.'

'O, yes, you are. Your friend the youngest Miss Stalman has been inquiring about you—"Mr. Harcross would be able to decide that;" "Mr. Harcross would be so interested in this;" and so on. How I detest girls who are always going on about married men!'

'Has the youngest Miss Stalman that infirmity? Perhaps it has arisen from a dearth of single men; they do seem rather a scarce commodity. However, Miss Stalman can exist very well without me for an afternoon or so. I hope you haven't been dull, Augusta.'

'I have not been particularly gay. I don't care about billiards, as you know; and I have looked through all the books in the last box from London, and there is really nothing in them; and there seems no chance of our getting a drive before dinner.'

'Not unless you defy the elements, my dear. Suppose you stop and have a walk with me—this is a capital room for an indoor constitutional; and we so seldom have any opportunity for confidential talk nowadays. Don't you think this kind of visiting is something like living under a glass case?'

'I do not find that we ever have much to say to each other when opportunity does favour us,' Mrs. Harcross replied stiffly. 'You appear to be much more eloquent in the society of Miss Lucy Stalman.'

'Miss Stalman is not my wife,' replied Mr. Harcross, with a careless shrug. 'I am not obliged to be in earnest when I talk to her; I am only doing company. Besides, that kind of balderdash is my trade, and I may as well keep my hand in; it is the sort of stuff with which I beguile my adversaries and amuse my colleagues at Westminster. Come, Augusta,' he said, seeing no sign of brightening in his wife's moody countenance, 'you are not going to be jealous of Lucy Stalman, *par exemple*. I thought that kind of thing was quite out of your line.'

'I suppose you thought it out of my line to care for you, or to feel your coldness,' she answered bitterly.

'My dear Augusta, how unreasonable this is!' exclaimed Mr. Harcross, taken somewhat by surprise at this unwonted display of feeling. 'Can you for a moment imagine that it has been any gratification to me to talk to that young woman, or that I take the faintest interest in her? I was obliged to do something—to put on a kind of spurious gaiety—to contribute my quota to the general clatter.'

They had not begun their promenade, but were standing in the middle of the gallery, near a carved-oak buffet, on which there was a dusty collection of oriental china, cracked saucers and Canton cups, which had been considered priceless gems of art in their day. Mr. Harcross stood idly fingering the fragile teacups, changing their positions as if he had been playing a game of thimble-rig with them. Mrs. Harcross walked away to one of the windows with a little impatient sigh, and stood looking out at the dim rain-blotted landscape.

'It is not that,' she said presently, in a contemptuous tone. 'You cannot suppose that I could be jealous of such a frivolous chit as Lucy Stalman. It is not that, Hubert; it is only—' She broke down suddenly with a choking sound that was like a stifled sob.

'Only what, my dear?' Mr. Harcross asked, tearing himself away from the teacups and going over to her. Her face was turned so resolutely towards the window, that he could not see it without a greater effort than it was natural for him to make; he could only lay his hand gently on her shoulder, and repeat his question in a somewhat graver tone.

There was no answer, but the choking sound was not repeated. Mrs. Harcross stood steady as a rock.

'What is the meaning of all this, Augusta? What is amiss between us?'

'What is amiss between us!' she repeated. 'Do you need to be told that? Is it not sufficiently obvious to the dullest comprehension what is amiss between us? A trifle. Only that you have never loved me.'

'Who has been putting this stuff into your head, Augusta?'

'My own reason. The knowledge began to dawn upon me long time ago, even in London, where our lives were so busy, and we were hardly ever alone. It has become a little clearer to me perhaps, in this house, where we have been thrown more together and where I have had time to observe other married couples, and to see the difference between their union and ours.'

'I suppose you mean Sir Francis and Lady Clevedon, who are only just out of their honeymoon, and are in the gushing stage. Unfortunately, you see, I cannot gush. If you expect that kind of thing from me, you will always have ground for complaint. In the first place, I am, I daresay, ten years older than Frank Clevedon and, in the second place, I am built of a harder kind of wood. I don't break out into leaf and blossom as that sort of man does.'

'I don't exact anything, Hubert,' his wife answered gloomily. 'I have only made a discovery. It is one that I have made by degrees; but I think it has come fully home to me in this house.'

If she had hoped to wring protestations of affection from him by this upbraiding, if she had thought to extort some tender



avowal by this complaint, she must needs have been sorely disappointed by the calm business-like tone of his reply.

‘My dear Augusta,’ he began, with a manner that was at once kindly and serious, ‘I am the last man upon earth to argue such a point as this; indeed, it is not one that will admit of argument. Call domestic love into question, and it ceases to be. It is too delicate a blossom to bear rough handling. God knows I have tried to do my duty, have never knowingly thwarted a wish of yours, however trivial. So far from wishing to loosen the tie that binds us, I would gladly have it made closer. I wish we had children, my dear, and that our fine house was more like home. I wish society claimed rather less of your attention, and that you could sympathise more warmly with my pursuits and aspirations, small as they may be. Come, Augusta, let us leave matrimonial bickerings to sillier people than you and I. I told you this was an unlucky house for me to come to; do not make me too true a prophet.’

‘An unlucky house for you to come to!’ echoed Augusta, turning to him with a sudden suspicion in her face. ‘No; you did not say that. You were only unwilling to come. What do you mean by this being an unlucky house?’

‘Does it not seem in a fair way to prove so, when you begin a kind of upbraiding which I never heard from you before?’

‘You are always talking in enigmas, Hubert, and I never knew any one from whom it was more difficult to get a straight answer. I want to know why you call this house unlucky.’

‘Are you very anxious for an answer?’ he inquired with a provoking coolness.

They were standing face to face by this time. He had not often seen his wife so much in earnest. He smiled at her eagerness with a somewhat wintry smile.

‘I am very anxious.’

‘Then I will answer you in five words—Because it is not mine.’

His wife looked at him for a few moments in utter silence, as if petrified by surprise.

‘Because it is not yours, Hubert!’ she repeated. ‘You call this house unlucky because it is not yours! Do you wish me to suppose that you are capable of so paltry a sentiment as envy; that you actually envy Sir Francis the possession of Clevedon?’

‘Hardly that. Frank Clevedon is a good fellow enough, and I harbour no grudge against *him*. In point of fact, I rather like him. Yet were I disposed to be bitter, this place is very well calculated to inspire bitterness. I am only human, Augusta; status is the prize I have worked for, and you know how hard I have worked, and how little of what people call the pleasures of this life I have

tasted. A man cannot serve two masters: my master has been Success, and I have served him well. Yet I think I would rather have the position that a good old name, supported by such an estate as this, gives a man than the best place I am ever likely to win at the Bar.'

'That is quite possible,' replied Augusta, rather contemptuously. 'I might like very well to be a duchess; but if my most intimate friend happened to be one, I should not envy her her strawberry leaves.'

'The cases are not parallel, my dear. There may be peculiar reasons why I should feel some touch of bitterness about Clevedon.'

'Peculiar reasons! What reasons for bitterness can you possibly have in relation to a place that you never saw till ten days ago?'

'How do you know that I had not seen it before?'

'Because you did not say so.'

'I might not care about talking of the place. You know that I did not like coming to it—that you brought me here against my will.'

'I begin to think Weston was right, and that some association with your stay at Brierwood Farm made this visit painful to you!'

The dark stern face flushed, and then paled. In spite of the mastery which Mr. Harcross had acquired over his emotions, there were some home thrusts that made their mark.

'I was not thinking of my stay at Brierwood,' he said, recovering himself promptly. 'I had seen Clevedon before I saw Brierwood.'

'How singularly uncommunicative you were upon the subject then!' said Augusta in an offended tone. Never had she felt so angry with him; no, not even on the night of their first quarrel. It was a smouldering fire, which perhaps had been kindled there and had been fanned into flame by Weston's insinuations.

'I tell you again, it is not a subject I care about discussing. By the way, you mentioned Weston Vallory just now, in a manner which leads me to conclude that I am indebted to him for the afternoon's unexpected outbreak. Now, I am not given to threatening, but it is only fair to tell you that any interference of that kind and from that quarter, is just the likeliest influence in the world to make a life-long breach between us. I know Mr. Weston Vallory by heart, and—tolerate him. But let me once see his finger in my domestic affairs, and it will be war to the knife between us. You would have to make your election between your husband and your cousin. It's hardly worth while prolonging a conversation that seems destined to be unpleasant,' he added after a brief pause.

‘I’ll go down to the billiard-room and see how the match is getting on.’

He walked towards the door, but Augusta stopped him.

‘You shall not leave me like that, Hubert,’ her voice tremulous, her breast heaving with suppressed passion. ‘What do I care for Weston Vallory? He is my first-cousin, and he is useful and obliging; but you know that I do little more than—tolerate him. But I am not going to be put off in this way. I am determined to penetrate the secret of your dislike to this house. I don’t think I have a jealous nature, but that there should be a secret between you and me is something more than I can bear. There is a woman at the bottom of this mystery, Hubert.’

‘What if I admit the fact?’ said Mr. Harcross coolly.

‘There is a woman concerned in your secret, then!’ cried Augusta breathlessly.

‘Yes. My secret, as you call it, concerns a woman who died thirty years ago, and that woman was my mother.’

‘Your mother!’

‘Yes, Augusta. You have goaded me into this confession, as you surprised me into a former one. Heaven knows whether it is best for both of us that I should be thus candid; whether we shall seem any nearer to each other when you know all that makes the brief and bitter story of my life; but since you make this business into a grievance, and seem to take the matter so deeply to heart, I may as well tell you everything there is to be told. Do you remember the night Sir Francis Clevedon dined at your father’s house—the first time you saw him?’

‘Perfectly,’ murmured Augusta, looking at him with a face full of wonder and vague expectancy. ‘But what can that have to do with your secret?’

‘You remember that on that first meeting you were struck by the likeness between him and me, and since we have been here you have heard all these frivolous fools babbling about my resemblance to the Clevedon portraits.’

‘Of course I have heard them.’

‘And yet the fact has never suggested any idea, any suspicion? You have never so much as wondered whether there might not be a reason for so marked a likeness between two men, who are, to all appearance, strangers?’

‘What reason could there be?’ exclaimed Augusta, with a frightened look.

‘That Francis Clevedon’s father and mine were the same.’

‘What!’ cried his wife, with unutterable horror. ‘You are the—illegitimate brother of the master of this house?’

‘No; I will not take upon myself that stigma. I have no certain knowledge as to the legitimacy or illegitimacy of my birth. I

only know that the man who blighted my mother's life was Sir Lucas Clevedon. I have told you before to-day that I could never discover whether he did or did not marry her. There was only one man likely to know the truth—that man was Lord Dartmoor, my father's most intimate friend, but he died and made no sign. All that I know is, that about a year before my mother's death, Sir Lucas, at Lord Dartmoor's instigation, sold an estate of some value, and settled the purchase-money upon my mother and me. Now I do not believe Sir Lucas Clevedon was the kind of man to make any such sacrifice without a motive, and that a motive stronger than a selfish man's love. It is quite possible there had been some sort of marriage abroad, and that this settlement was the price paid for secrecy. Yet I hardly think if the ceremony had been valid—a marriage that would hold water in a law-court—my mother would have sold my birthright. I love her too dearly to believe that she could be unjust to her child. I love her too dearly to believe that she was ever anything less than my father's wife.'

'And you have never even thought of asserting your rights?' asked Augusta.

'Never. If I have rights, I have no evidence to prove them, not so much as the certificate of my birth. Nor do I even know where I was born, nor by what name my wretched existence was recorded in the register of humanity. I am not the man to advance a claim I could not support, or wantonly to bring dishonour upon my mother's name by dragging the question of my birthright before the world. The settlement which my father made was sufficient to secure me a good education, and to keep me respectably while I waited for my first brief. I owe it to Lord Dartmoor that I began life at Harrow and Oxford. I owe it to Lord Dartmoor that I was not a shoeless pickpocket, sleeping under the dark arches in the Adelphi.'

Augusta Harcross covered her face with her hands and shuddered visibly. She was a woman to whom this kind of thing, this doubtful birth, this possibility of naked feet and dark arches, was unspeakably horrible. To her, who had been nurtured in the luxurious lap of middle-class prosperity, the thoughts of these degrading circumstances were as glimpses of some nethermost gulf, too black and deep to be looked into. She covered her face involuntarily, as if by that gesture she would fain have shut out the full horror of the situation. That she should have married a man so situated seemed to her the bitterest shame that could have befallen her—a disgrace from which there could be no recovery. And she had chosen him as a man likely to achieve distinction for her—a man whose name it would be an honour to bear. Great heavens! what a revelation! Future ages would know of her as the wife of Sir Lucas Clevedon's illegitimate son. Such secrets may be hidden for the moment, but leak out in history.

‘His brother!’ she said at last. ‘Sir Lucas Clevedon’s unacknowledged son! O, why did you ever bring me here?’

‘It was you who insisted on my coming.’

‘Do you suppose that I would have come here if I had known *this*?’ cried Mrs. Harcross indignantly. ‘The very name of the place would have been detestable to me.’

‘If it has become so now we can go away at once,’ replied Hubert quietly. ‘There is nothing to hinder us.’

‘And challenge suspicion by the very fact of our going! After *all* the talk about your likeness to these Clevedons, too! I daresay *there* are people who suspect already. It is too horrible to think of.’

‘I am sorry I told you this, since the discovery is so painful to you.’

‘Painful! You have stung me to the heart. To think of *my* husband in such a position—not daring to acknowledge his own brother—a visitor in his father’s house without the right to utter his father’s name!’

‘It is a pity my parents were not wiser in their generation,’ said Mr. Harcross, with a contemptuous laugh. ‘If my mother had drowned me in Lake Lucerne, for instance; or if my father had dropped me out of the travelling carriage on the edge of some convenient precipice, you would have been spared this humiliation.’

‘Laugh at me as much as you please. But dearly as I have loved you, I think I would rather you had died long ago than that I should have lived to suffer what I suffer to-day,’ said Mrs. Harcross; and with those words she sundered the frail bond that had bound her husband’s heart with a sentiment which was half remorse, half gratitude. His gratitude and his remorseful sense of having wronged her perished together, as he listened to that ruthless speech.

‘I do not think there are many wives who would have taken such a revelation in such a spirit,’ he replied, with an exceeding calmness; ‘but I do think that your character is the natural outcome of your surroundings, and I am hardly surprised. Am I to conclude that you wish to remain here until the proposed end of *your* visit?’

‘Certainly. I will do nothing to make people talk.’

‘As you please. I came here to gratify you, and shall remain until you’re tired. It’s half-past six, I see,’ looking at his watch. ‘Isn’t it time you began to think about dressing for dinner?’

His quiet tone betrayed no emotion whatever. If he were offended ever so deeply, she could not tell how much or how little. There was no quickened breathing, no unsteadiness of the voice, nor the faintest quiver of the firm thin lips.

‘Your toilet is such an important business,’ he said; ‘and mine only an affair of half an hour. I’ll go and smoke my cigar in the colonnade while you make your election between pink and blue.’ And so they parted; he to go, as he had said, to one of the stone colon-

nades at the end of the house, where he took another solitary promenade, and solaced his wounded spirit with a cigar.

'I'm glad I told her,' he said to himself. 'I'm glad she showed me her nature in all its nakedness. Great heaven! what a narrow selfish soul! Not a thought of my loss, or my dishonour. Only herself—the cheat practised upon herself. I don't think I ever understood her thoroughly until to-day. At least I have done with compunction; I shall feel no more remorse for having contracted an engagement I cannot conscientiously fulfil. She only wanted a position, and that I have won for her. Loved me! she never can have loved me; if she had, she would have flung herself upon my breast to-day, and sobbed out her shame *for me* upon my heart. If I had told Grace Redmayne my story! O God! I can see the sweet sympathetic face lifted up to mine, the tender eyes shining through a mist of tears. I can almost feel the touch of the dear dead hands. O my love, my love! you would have perished to save my soul from pain; yet your memory is "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched."' '

Tullion had rather a hard time of it that evening at the toilet of her mistress. Mrs. Harcross, although distinguished at all times by a bearing which her maid called 'orty,' or 'stand-offish,' was for the most part, a lady of even temper. She was too proud to fling into a passion with a servant, or betray vexation at the failure of a new dress. That omnipresent and mysterious deity called 'Society' reigned supreme even in Augusta's dressing-room. She would not suffer her maid to see a countenance which she could not present to Society. This evening, however, Mrs. Harcross was evidently out of sorts.

'Why didn't you order a fire in my room, Tullion?' she exclaimed, looking contemptuously at the grate with its summer finery of paper shavings. 'On such a miserable day as this, a fire is an absolute necessity.'

'I can light it this moment, ma'am, if you like,' replied the dutiful Tullion, ready to speed off in quest of coals and wood.

'And smother me with smoke!' cried Augusta. 'No, thank you. I daresay all these old chimneys smoke abominably. What induced you to put out that diamond necklet?' she asked, pointing to a fiery serpent, coiled on a purple velvet cushion, a *chef-d'œuvre* of the jeweller's art, and her father's wedding present. 'Do you suppose I am going to parade the contents of my jewel-case every evening?'

'I beg your pardon, ma'am, if I was wrong. But I thought you would wear the amber silk and black lace, and being rather a 'eavy dress, it wants the relief of di'monds. You've not worn the amber yet.'



'I hate amber. Every woman with black hair wears amber. And the dress with the Maltese flounces is not amber, but maize. I wish you would learn to call colours by their right names. You can take out my black silk train.'

'Black silk, ma'am!' exclaimed Tullion, aghast. 'There ain't a death among the crowned heads of Europe, is there, ma'am?'

'Crowned heads, nonsense!'

'I thought it might be rile mourning, ma'am. You so seldom wear black.'

'Pray don't argue the point, Tullion; I shall wear black silk this evening.'

It was a petty caprice, no doubt, for so lofty a mind. But Mrs. Harcross had conceived a sudden horror of all that finery which had been hitherto the chief occupation and delight of her days. The treasures of those vast travelling-cases, brimming over with silks, and satins, and laces, and furbelows, seemed all at once transformed into so much sackcloth and ashes. Good heavens, was she to make herself splendid and conspicuous only to be pointed out as the wife of Sir Lucas Clevedon's natural son? How could she tell how many people knew the story of her husband's birth? This Lord Dartmoor who was in the secret might have told his friends right and left, and such knowledge spreads like a prairie fire. It was not because Mr. Harcross fancied his story unknown that it really was so. Half the people who shook his hand and ate his dinners might be familiar with the circumstances of his birth, and might secretly despise him. It was like living in an atmosphere of contempt.

So the glittering snake, and two infant snakes, his companions, which had coiled themselves into earrings, were put away in their velvet beds, and Mrs. Harcross wore a lustrous black silk dress, with a train three yards long, over which, when hard pressed by Tullion, she consented to wear a tunic of old point lace, which a Roman-catholic bishop might have envied. Dressed thus, with a knot of scarlet ribbon in her dark hair, and an antique cross of black pearls upon her neck, Mrs. Harcross looked more distinguished than in a more elaborate costume.

'There's nothing that don't become you, ma'am!' said the maid rapturously, as she looped up the tunic with a spray of scarlet geranium. 'Even black, which is so very trying to most brunette ladies.'

Mrs. Harcross contemplated herself contemptuously in the cheval glass before which she was standing, with the maid on her knees at her feet.

What did it matter how well or how ill she looked? She was only the wife of Sir Lucas Clevedon's illegitimate son.

# IMAGINARY LONDON

A Delusive Directory

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

## VII. ST. POGRAM'S PALACE AND ST. POGRAM'S-STREET.

'VARE to?' the hansom cabman inquires in an offhand and, as appears to me, not too respectful manner. 'St. Pogram's Palace,' reply, with the languid but lofty consciousness of having a good bourne to give; '*and look sharp.*' The cabman involuntarily touches his hat, and then transfers that touch, through the medium of whip, to his horse. He sets off, let us say from Brompton, at a tremendous pace; and as he passes the cab-rank at the top of Sloane street, I fancy him signaling in an occultly masonic manner to some brother Jehu that he is driving 'no end of a swell.'

He is not driving anything of the kind; and he will find out his mistake at the end of the journey, when I pay him a legal eighteen penny in lieu of the fanciful three-and-sixpenny fare upon which he may be reckoning. It is as easy to go to St. Pogram's Palace, if you put yourself in the right groove for going there, as to the Old Bailey; and indeed I rather astonished a cabman in Pall-mall the other evening by bidding him drive me to the Central Criminal Court. 'Do you mean Noogate?' asked the charioteer. 'Newgate will do,' I replied; and to increase his perplexity, I made him drive through Covent-garden-market, and stopping the vehicle by St. Paul's church, I bought a camellia japonica for my button-hole at Mrs. Buck's in the grand avenue. 'Now, wot can this cove be a-wantin' of at the Hold Bailey at five o'clock in the hevening with a vite choker and a flower in his coat?' the dubious cabman may have muttered to himself. 'Vitnesses don't wear vite chokers, and he can't be run of the grand jury. P'raps he's out on bail, and is goin' to surrender hisself.' Little did the simple-hearted cabman wis that I was bound to the Old Bailey sessions-house to eat marrow-pudding with the judges, and hobnob with the reverend ordinary. Life is a game at ups and downs; it is full of violent contrasts, and everything depends upon circumstances. It was my fortune, during the war in France, to be in gaol one morning and to dine with an ambassador in the evening; and on both occasions I did my best to accommodate myself to circumstances. You *must* do it if you wish to get on in the world; and if you will only get yourself into a properly philosophical frame of mind, and take the rough with the smooth, you will find his excellency's chambertin as palatable, in its degree, as the prison gnel,

and you will be as much at home at St. Pogram's Palace as at the Old Bailey.

To the first-named place the cabman swiftly bears me; but I must confess that, when I reach the palatial precincts, I am slightly doubtful as to the particular door by which I am to make an entrance. All I have known of St. Pogram's Palace hitherto is that it is a very ugly brick building, of immense antiquity and infinite dinginess, at the bottom of declivitous St. Pogram's-street, and that its rear gives upon St. Pogram's Park. Under a clock, I remember, between two stunted turrets, which you may see reproduced in one of Hogarth's pictures of the 'Rake's Progress'—the scene in which young Hopeful is arrested on a levée-day, as he is on his way to wait upon royalty—there is an archway, passing through which you enter a courtyard surrounded by a colonnade and some mean buildings. In that courtyard as a boy I used to go at about eleven o'clock in the forenoon to witness the ceremony of 'trooping' the guard, and to lose myself in wonderment as to why the Queen's marshalsmen wore those peculiarly shiny shakoes, and carried those elaborately gilt bâtons, and what they did when they were not clad in scarlet and gold lace. The entire remainder of St. Pogram's Palace is to me a mystery.

The cabman evidently knows no more about the place than I do; so we are fain, in stress of information, to appeal to a stalwart grenadier, muff-capped and greatcoated, who is pacing up and down with his firelock—I like the old word, all your Enfields, Martini-Henrys, and other arms of precision to the contrary—on his shoulder. 'Guards' mess?' says the cabman inquiringly. 'Scots Fusilier Guards,' I add, in condescending explanation. 'Dunno,' replies the grenadier, presumably (his accent taken into consideration) from Lancashire. Now here is a dilemma! There seem to be at least fifty private doors, all with shining brass plates upon them, and with bell-handles on the jambs in the St. Pogram's-street front of St. Pogram's Palace; but etiquette forbids me to pull the first top bell that looks handy, and ask for the mess of the Scots Fusilier Guards. Why, goodness gracious! my summons might be answered by the fifth footman of the Dowager Lady Methusalem (widow of Sir Hugh Methusalem, G.C.B.), to whom, as I read the other day in the newspapers, her Majesty has graciously granted the use of apartments in St. Pogram's Palace. We are fortunately extricated from our difficulty by a judicious policeman, who, I fancy, has been eying us for some time, in some uncertainty as to whether I might not be Guy Fawkes or Mr. Odger bent upon blowing up St. Pogram's Palace and the British constitution with a keg of petroleum concealed beneath the apron of the hansom. 'Guards' mess?' says the judicious policeman; 'yes, sir. First turning to the left before you come to the stable-yard, cabby. You're just in time. They dine at eight sharp, sir.' And the horal octave chimes from St. Pogram's clock

as the cabman deposits me at a low-browed door in another and smaller courtyard, smelling very powerfully of roast haunch of mutton.

There is nothing palatial about the door, or about a rickety staircase which I ascend, or a narrow lobby in which I find myself. I suppose palaces are bound to smell of roast meat about dinner-time; but I confess that I felt somewhat depressed at not seeing myself received by a gentleman usher, or a groom of the stole, or at least by a beef-eater. Where are the Queen's marshalsmen? where are the gentlemen pensioners? why are they not on duty? I cannot even so much as discern a controller of the household, or a member of the board of green cloth. Call this a palace? I declare that I am welcomed by a waiter—a servitor in waitorial black, and with a waitorially groggy face—whom, unless I am very much mistaken, I have met at the London Tavern (Asylum for Asses festival, the Earl of Fitz-Moke in the chair); at the check-taker's turnstile of the pit entrance, Theatre Royal Low-lane; and whom I have seen, with his legs hanging over the roof of a hearse, driving merrily from Brompton cemetery after the performance of a 'black job,' and his red face gleaming among the sable plumes like a poppy in a pine-forest.

'Guards' mess?' I say to the waiter, somewhat diffidently. 'Cert'nly, sir,' replies the functionary, 'which I am 'appy to see you agin, sir, lookin' so 'arty. Ah, what a speech you did make at the hannual of the Provident Cripples, when your 'elth was proposed in consekens of you're 'avin' come back from Japan!' The waiter is a little loose in his facts. I *was* at the Provident Cripples' annual dinner, and my health *was* drunk; but I had not come back from Japan at that precise period. It was from Java, if I remember aright, or from Jericho. Stay, it was Gravesend. I feel flattered, however, by the waiter's recognition of me, and have a pleasant sensation that we were boys together.

Vanity! Take physic, pomp. Do not always feel flattered at being recognised. To me is given the miserable faculty of long and minute remembrance. I remember once being taken over an immense gaol. With the governor and the chief warder I tramped up incessant spiral staircases and through interminable corridors, and peered into innumerable cells, all desperately alike, from their construction to their furniture—their barren and cheerless chattels—and from those to the garb and mien of their occupants. The keys of a gaol are all alike; the warders have a family likeness; nor should I be surprised to learn, that if a collection were formed of the *cartes de visite* of all the prison governors in the United Kingdom, those gentlemen would be found to be as facially resemblant to each other as two peas. Well, we saw prisoners making shoes, and weaving mats, and plaiting baskets; prisoners brooding over Bibles and Testaments; prisoners munching their beef free from bone, or licking the last drop



of gruel from their panikins. There are never any crumbs left after prison meal. I saw one man who was waiting for the flogging which he had been sentenced by the judge at the assizes, and very bowed and miserable did that soon-to-be-scourged miscreant look. A man downstairs, who on the ensuing Monday, and for the offence of breaking-in the head of a gamekeeper with a bludgeon, and so killing him, was to be sacrificed at the shrine of St. Partridge—that is to say hanged—I was not allowed to see; the clergyman was with him. Then I was taken over to the female side, and introduced to a very snappish matron, with a bonnet *en permanence* cocked on the top of a head of which the hair was cut as short as that of a school-girl—in the days when schoolgirls had their hair cut short, instead of being allowed to wear chignons, and ‘waterfalls,’ or monstrous afts, or ‘round tires like the moon,’ like the Assyrian women of old. There was a time when schoolgirls wore pinafores and short skirts and white frilled trousers, and were whipped when they did not behave themselves; but Miss Tickletohy’s birch has been long since laid up in ordinary, and the bread-and-butter romps of the last generation are transformed into precocious pussies, who make eyes at the curate, who barely condescend to play croquet, and who are wholly above the vulgar exercise of the skipping-rope.

The snappish matron showed me, somewhat grudgingly, the interior of a good many female cells; and I noticed that her manner of addressing the unhappy inmates was much harsher and more unfeeling than that employed by the gaol governor and his warders towards the men prisoners. The men spoke to their captives as though they had a sense that the captives were only human beings who had gotten themselves into a scrape, and that it was simply through the infinite mercy of Providence that they, the captors, had not gotten into a similar scrape themselves; whereas the snappish matron—and I have noticed this with a good many snappish spinners besides—treated, so far as language went, the degraded but still human creatures under her charge as though they were wild beasts. It was, ‘Come out here;’ ‘Stand up;’ ‘Hold up your head;’ ‘You’re not doing your work right, and you’ll be punished, I can tell you,’ with similar endearing expressions: whereas to the males the governor would say, with a bluff kindness, ‘Well, my man, how are you to-day?’ or, ‘Mind you do your work, and it will be all right. We don’t allow any shirking here.’ Why is it that women are so cruel to women, while they are so infinitely merciful to members of the opposite sex? Observe that the ‘prentices whom Mother Brown-gage whipped to death and hid in the coal-hole were girls. Had they been boys, she might have abated in her tormenting.

One cell-door I specially remember the snappish matron—after peeping through the ‘inspection hole’ in the iron-bound panel—being wide open, and bade the captive within come out into the lobby.

'She's a very bad case,' she said to me curtly. 'Dangerous sometimes; and she'd very likely fly at us like a tom-cat, if we went into the cell. Cat,' she repeated; 'if I'd my way, I'd tie her up and give her a dozen with the cat like a man. *That* would do her good. She's been in the "darks" over and over again, and doesn't care for em a bit. She'd care for nine stout tails of knotted whipcord over her shoulders. *That* would warm her.'

The object of these benevolent aspirations came out as she was bidden into the corridor. She was a tall woman, probably young, and possibly handsome; but prison discipline had completely succeeded in obliterating any signs of youth or comeliness which she might have possessed. She had got the prison complexion—the muddy pallor resulting from nourishment on gruel, dry bread, a little scraggy boiled meat twice a week, and cold water. The lines of her form were utterly hidden by the hideous prison dress, and what kind of hair she retained on her cropped head was uncertain, since it was carefully concealed under an abominable mob-cap. Only there remained to her a pair of great blue eyes.

'Eighteen months' hard labour,' muttered the snappish matron to me, 'and four previous convictions. She'll have penal servitude for life before she's done with it. I know you will,' she went on, viciously turning from me to the prisoner, and casting a furious glance into the woman's cell; 'you've been tearing the flyleaf of your Testament again. Your dinner will be stopped again for that. I'm sick and tired of reporting you; that I am.'

'I'll tear up everything I've got on,' said the Bad Case sullenly; 'and I shouldn't mind tearing out your eyes into the bargain. What am I brought out here to be stared at for?'

'Insolent and insubordinate language. Third time this week,' was the only comment made by the snappish matron as she made a note of the Bad Case's inquiry in a small memorandum book.

The great blue eyes continued to stare at me; and I know not why, I was fain to cast my own eyes down.

'That will do,' the snappish matron said after a pause; 'go back to your cell, No. Twenty-six.'

No. Twenty-six sulkily obeyed the command; but as she marched back into her dungeon, she turned her mob-capped head over her shoulder, and shooting at me a Parthian dart of recognition from her great blue eyes, she said,

'I know that fellow. *What's he in for?*'

'Nothing but her impudence,' remarked the snappish matron, shutting-to the cell-door with a clang, and turning the key as though she were wrenching out one of the Bad Case's double teeth. 'Nothing but her impudence. Gentlemen who come among such creatures must expect to hear such things. She's said worse than that to the visiting magistrates. I shall report her for it, of course.'



I did not think it worth while to beg the snappish matron not to denounce the Bad Case for special punishment in connection with her inquiry as to what I was in for. She was evidently as accurately reported as the Right Honourable William Ewart Gladstone.

You will admit, after this, I trust, that it is not always a flattering thing to be recognised. This gaol-bird evidently knew me, although I could not remember having seen her before in the whole course of my life.

All this while I have been looking at the waiter, and the waiter has been looking at me at the top of the landing leading to the Guards' messroom in St. Pogram's Palace; and while another waiter has taken my hat and helped me off with my greatcoat, the whole panorama of my visit to that doleful county gaol has been unrolled before the eyes of my soul. But a door opens, a cheery voice greets me, and the gallant Guardsman who is to be my entertainer grasps me by the hand.

I must not say anything now about our dinner, because that was a Real and not an Imaginary performance; but I may say something about St. Pogram's Palace and St. Pogram's-street. We are very badly off in this country for palaces. France is not so wealthy in regal mansions as she was in 1869; but even after the loss of the Tuileries and St. Cloud she possesses the Luxembourg and the Elysée, Neuilly and Versailles, with the two Trianons, St. Germain and Chantilly, Compiègne, and that rare old castle at Pau in the Pyrenees, which Monsieur Louis Adolphe Thiers recently so obligingly offered as a residence to his Holiness Pope Pius the Ninth. The sovereign whom Pio Nono may be supposed to love about as dearly as a certain Personage is said to love holy water is, in the way of palaces, the most affluent monarch in Europe. Victor Emmanuel, king of Italy, is a very Croesus of castles. He has palaces in Rome—the Quirinal and Monte Citorio—and sooner or later he must have the Vatican and Castel Gandolfo to boot; he has palaces at Milan, at Venice, at Parma, at Naples, at Genoa, at Turin, at Modena, at Verona, at Mantua, at Palermo, at Florence, at Ferrara, at Bologna, and at Bergamo, in addition to a quantity of country houses and shooting-boxes scattered up and down all over Italy. The truth is that Victor Emmanuel is the survivor of a monarchical ton-tine, and has become the proprietor of as many palaces as there are dethroned dynasties in the peninsula. But how do we stand in respect to palaces? Our monarchy has endured with but one solitary interregnum—the occupation of Cromwell, and even the Protector kept up his state at Whitehall and Hampton Court—for a thousand years; but Whitehall as a palace exists no longer; the superb Banqueting House has been converted into a chapel; and on the site, perchance, of that 'glorious gallery' in which John Evelyn heard the French boy singing love songs, and King Charles playing basset with

his courtiers the Sunday evening before his death, there is now a police-station. Hampton Court might be made a really regal residence, and the pictures might be advantageously transported to the National Gallery or the South Kensington Museum; the public would be quite satisfied with being allowed to view Wolsey's Hall, and the privilege of roaming in Bushey Park would quite compensate for exclusion from the prim and formal gardens of Hampton Court Palace itself—gardens in which I always fancy that I can see William the Dutchman walking arm-in-arm with Bentinck or Van Keppel, fortunate Hollanders whose descendants are now anglicised into a Duke of Portland and an Earl of Albemarle. The asparagus which William taught Jonathan Swift to cut in the Dutch fashion might have been grown in Hampton Court gardens, as well as at Moor Park. I fancy, too, that I can see grave Queen Mary pruning the tendrils in the great grape-house; demure ladies-in-waiting behind her, and Bishop Burnet, in a silken cassock and a very large full-bottomed wig standing by with an obsequious smile on his episcopal countenance. But Hampton has been thoroughly depalatialised. At present it combines the attributes of a second-rate museum and of an asylum for decayed members of the aristocracy. More than one aged and infirm scion of the upper classes has likewise found a refuge in St. Pogran's Palace; but let that pass.

I don't know anything about Claremont or Frogmore, except that the *Court Circular* sometimes informs us of the movements of royal people to and from these mansions. There is a royal lodge too, I have been told, in Richmond Park, and one between Greenwich Park and Blackheath; but none of these edifices can properly be called palaces. Greenwich, as originally designed by Sir Christopher Wren, was as noble a palace as Whitehall, and as such was inhabited by Charles II.; but it was converted into a hospital for seamen, and has now been entirely abandoned to solitude and neglect. There are some vestiges of a palace at Richmond, the Sheen where Henry VIII. died, but the fragments of the edifice have been let-out as private houses, one of which was lately occupied by that world-known impresario Mr. E. T. Smith. The little old bed-chamber over an archway, where Queen Elizabeth is supposed to have expired after dismal lingering, is still fondly believed in by the dwellers in the royal village of Richmond. There was a palace at Winchester. The last that was heard about it was at the time of the first French Revolution, when George III. good-naturedly allowed a number of emigrant French bishops and priests to take refuge in his tumble-down old house at Winton; but the premises have now been converted into a barrack, or a prison, or something of that kind. But what has become of the palace of the Stuart kings at Newmarket, and which was used by the last monarch of the Stuart race who ruled over us, Queen Anne? Where is Nonsuch House? where is

the royal palace at York? where that at Canterbury? The Tower of London, as Mr. Hepworth Dixon has pleasantly told us—after Mr. Brayley and Mr. Harrison Ainsworth had told us the same thing—was once a palace, as well as a prison and a fortress; but of the palatial portion of the structure not a relic remains. The Pavilion at Brighton has been turned into a kind of moral Alhambra Palace of Varieties; and goodness only knows who now has the privilege of inhabiting old King George's lodge at Kew, or what has become of his marine residence at Weymouth. By this time it may have been turned into an Establishment for Young Ladies. Balmoral Castle, Osborne House, Sandringham, are, no doubt, all very comfortable and luxurious residences; but they cannot, without an abuse of terms, be called palatial. Buckingham Palace, which was really handsome when the open courtyard could be seen through the Marble Arch, now standing shivering at Tyburn, has been built up so as usually to resemble a barrack, an hotel, and a factory. Kensington Palace is a big red-brick house, and nothing more; and the same may be said of Marlborough House. Our only real, stately, dignified, regal, venerable palace, is Windsor Castle. As for poor dear St. Pogram's, it must be considered, from a palatial point of view, simply deplorable. It seems to have been built during the most disastrous period of English bad taste in art. Nothing can be done with it in the way of improvement, save to improve it off the surface of the earth altogether, by pulling it down. By its removal either a magnificent vista might be opened into the park, showing the really handsome York, Stafford, and Bridgewater Houses as well; or by demolishing Marlborough House as well, a splendid site might be secured for the erection of a palace for the Prince of Wales. The direct right of way for the public into the park by the side of the German chapel would be preserved by the simple expedient of dividing the palace into two *corps de logis*, connected by a covered bridge spanning the roadway, just as the Bridge of Sighs connects the Ducal palace at Venice with the Carceri, and as the Romanofski Most connects the Winter Palace at St. Petersburg with the Hermitage. At least the bridge would be an architectural novelty in this country, here, as a rule, there is a terrible dead level of monotony and tastelessness.

But one thing is certain, if not in Real, at least in Imaginary London—St. Pogram's Palace must come down. Its shabby, grimy, dingy front is a blot on the scutcheon of a splendid neighbourhood, and an insult to the stately club-palaces of Pall-mall. There is nothing venerable, nothing worth preserving about St. Pogram's, and the sooner its dingy bricks are carted away as rubbish the better.

## SIGNS AND TOKENS

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'The weird sisters, hand in hand,  
Posters of the sea and land,  
Thus do go about, about :  
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,  
And thrice again to make up nine.  
Peace !—the charm's wound up.'

*Macbeth.*

IN these practical days of railroads and telegraphs, when the winners of the 'Derby' is known at Calcutta almost before the bustling crowd round the Grand Stand have yet made out the numbers put up, we might well imagine that the age of superstition and credulity was long past ; but with all our advantages of social improvement and modern education this is far from being the fact, as is evidenced by a case which was recently tried before the magistrates at Scarborough, in which one domestic servant succeeded in getting the whole of the wearing-apparel from her fellow-servant, as a consideration for her good offices in inducing a mythical familiar, whom she called 'Lord Fell,' to cure the other's aunt, who was nearly dying. Truth is indeed stranger than fiction ; for an amount of blind credulity came to light during the hearing of the case which, if put into the pages of a novel, would be scouted as the veriest nonsense. Even among well-educated people we meet with many superstitions, such as not dining thirteen at table, not passing under a ladder, and so forth ; but it is with country 'folk-lore' that we have now most to do ; and many of the superstitious observances are so quaint and so implicitly believed in, that some account of them may not prove uninteresting.

In Lancashire and many other parts of England, the country gossips begin to note the omens and cast their spells about a child before its birth, and do not let go of the individual even after death. For instance, an infallible method of ascertaining the sex of an unborn child is to char the blade-bone of a shoulder of mutton till two holes can be made in it, a string is then passed through them, and is hung over the door of the house, and of whatever sex is the person who first enters, the child will be the same. Pursuing the infant through the various disorders peculiar to childhood, we find that Daffy's Elixir and Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Sirup may be cast to the winds, for there is a magic cure for them all. If it has the thrush, catch a duck and hold the bill wide open in the child's mouth ; the cold breath of the duck will remove the disease (what-



ever its merits may be, this certainly appears to be a *quack* remedy). Hooping-cough will never be taken by a child that has ridden on a bear (probably because the bear takes the child first). Again, roast mouse cures the measles though some people might imagine measles the more preferable of the two; and, finally, children should always be weaned on a Good Friday. As the individual grows up, the directions for his well-being can be personally attended to, though it must require a somewhat retentive memory to bear them all in mind. If he eats an egg, a hole must be made in the shell to avoid a witch sailing out in it and wrecking ships; if he gets the cramp at night, his slippers must be put under the bed, soles upwards. For a sty in the eye, a hair must be pulled from a cat's tail, and rubbed over it nine times (no mention is made as to any possible objection on the cat's part). If he sees a white horse he must spit at it, irrespective, it is presumed, of any opinion which the rider may have on the subject; and if he meets a red-haired woman while setting out on a journey, he must turn back. If he hears a singing in his right ear, some one is praising him—if in his left, some one is abusing him; but here he has his remedy, for, by biting his little finger, he can make the evil speaker bite his tongue. The individual may now fairly be assumed to have arrived at man's estate, and likely to take unto himself a partner; therefore, full directions may be obtained from any gossip versed in folk-lore as to the magic influences applicable to courtship in general. In the first place, he must never go courting on a Friday; this is such a *sine qua non* in many parts of the north of England, that no village fair one will receive her swains on that day. To dream of his lady-love, he must stick nine pins into the shoulder-blade of a rabbit, and take it to bed with him (it is somewhat difficult to conceive how any one could dream at all with such a bedfellow, but *c'est selon*). When he first sees the moon in the new year, he must immediately take off one stocking, run to a stile, and under the great toe he will find a hair of the same colour as that of his fair one that is to be. This is really a very awkward observance, especially in a district where stiles are scarce and the country rough: fancy Adolphus Fitz-Foppington seeing the moon under these circumstances in Regent-street! Now we get to presents and tests of affection. The luckiest thing a man can present to his sweetheart is the first egg laid by a pullet. If the fire burns brightly when it is poked, the absent lover is in good spirits. A girl shelling peas, when she finds a peascod with nine peas in it, must lay it on the threshold of the kitchen-door, and the first bachelor who walks over it will fall in love with her. If a girl is doubtful as to the depth of her lover's affection, she has only to throw an apple-pip into the fire; if it cracks, all is well; if not, the sooner she looks out for another help-mate the better. When a newly-married couple come home, it is

absolutely necessary to their future felicity to bring in a hen and make it cackle. We have heard of a good many married households where extra cackling was quite superfluous, but perhaps this is intended as a counter-irritant.

Of the signs and tokens of death there is no end. The crowing of a hen is a sure forerunner, so is also the squeaking of a mouse behind a bedstead. If a cow breaks into your garden, there will be a death in the family within six months; if a pigeon enters a house, a child will infallibly die. When a death takes place, all the doors and windows should be unfastened, as in many parts of the country it is thought that the first pains of purgatory are inflicted by the soul squeezing through the closed doors. We have something like this in Swift's *Journey from this World to the Next*, where the spirits, conversing on their way to the throne of 'Micros,' relate to each other how they had to wait till an open door or window in the house in which the death had taken place, enabled them to get free from it. Every one knows the Celtic superstition of the 'fetch,' or appearance of one's double, being an immediate forerunner of a violent death. There are very few of the peasantry, or indeed of the better classes, who do not believe firmly in the 'Banshee,' or that its wail will not bring death or misfortune to the house near which it is heard. There is an old belief that no one can die on a bed containing game feathers; and another, that has some amount of truth in it, that death must take place at the turn of the tide. Shakespeare commemorates this in Madam Quickly's account of Falstaff's death, 'a' parted even just between twelve and one, even at turning o' the tide.' Dickens too, in *David Copperfield*, makes old Barkis's spirit go out with the tide. These are some of the most common beliefs and superstitions which are to be found in England. To turn now to a more distant and less enlightened country: the observances among the Chinese are the more extraordinary from their being carried out under the sanction of religion. No Chinaman will open a shop, marry a wife, without first 'chin chinning Joss,' as it is termed, and casting lots to see if the 'gods' are propitious or otherwise. The method of carrying this out is as follows: each temple in China has belonging to it about a hundred stanzas of poetry relating to a variety of subjects; each stanza is numbered and printed on a separate piece of paper; in addition to this, there are a quantity of lots made of bamboo slips about eight inches long, and corresponding to the number of stanzas, and referring to them by number. The individual who wishes to make application to the 'god' presents himself before his image on his knees, and after performing the 'ro-too,' by touching the ground with his head nine times, states his name and residence, the object of his inquiries, and, whether on his own or another's account, he then takes a bamboo tube containing the lots, and shakes it gently



before the idol until a slip falls to the ground. He then rises from his knees and picks up this slip, and places it so that the 'god' can see the number of the lot written on it; he then takes two pieces of wood, each having a round and a flat side, called a 'kapue;' after passing these through the incense, he tosses them into the air before the idol, if they fall so that both round sides are uppermost, the answer is negative and everything is unpropitious; if they fall with one round and one flat side up, the answer is in the affirmative, and the man may go on his way rejoicing. When a Chinaman dies, and his bereaved relatives wish to communicate with him, a medium is employed. These mediums are females, and are of two classes. One of them professes to obtain and transmit the news required, by means of a very diminutive image made of the wood of the willow tree. The image is first exposed to the dew for forty-nine nights, when after the performance of certain ceremonies it is believed to have the power of speaking.

The image is laid upon the stomach of the woman to whom it belongs, and she by means of it pretends to be the medium of communication between the dead and the living. She sometimes sends the image into the world of spirits to find the person about whom intelligence is sought; it then changes into an elf or sprite, and ostensibly departs on its errand. The spirit of the person enters the image, and gives the information sought after by the surviving relatives.

The woman is supposed not to utter a word, the message seeming to proceed from the image. The questions are addressed to the medium, the replies appear to come from her stomach; there is probably a kind of ventriloquism employed, and the fact that the voice appears to proceed from the stomach undoubtedly assists the delusion; any way, there are scores and scores of these mediums implicitly believed in, and widows who desire to communicate with their deceased husbands, or people who desire any information about a future state, invariably resort to their aid.

Another class of women, who pretend to be able to obtain information from or about the dead, proceed in a very different manner: when their services are called into requisition, a table is covered with three sticks of lighted incense placed upright, with two lighted candles, a censer, and a small quantity of boiled rice; seated by these things, the medium inquires the name and surname of the deceased, and the precise time of death, and then bows her head upon the table, so as to conceal her face, muttering in a loud voice a sort of incantation; those who desire news of their dead relative draw near, and wait amid the most solemn silence the moment when the spirit of the dead shall rush into the medium, and enable her to communicate to them the news of

After giving a certain number of answers to the questions, ~~com-~~tortions of apparent agony begin to rack the medium, generally ~~con-~~minating in a violent fit of retching, after which, the spirit of ~~the~~ dead having departed, she speedily becomes herself again.

A most curious Chinese custom is that of releasing spirits of ~~the~~ departed from hell. If a medium reports to the survivors of any ~~one~~ deceased that their relative is gone to the regions of everlasting punishment, it at once becomes their bounden duty to endeavour ~~to~~ release him from his pains.

With this object certain priests are consulted, who provide ~~five~~ common earthen tiles, which are placed on the ground, one in ~~the~~ centre and four at the corners; in the midst are placed a number of images of persons cut out of paper, and some mock money—the tiles represent hell, and the paper images a portion of its occupants. Each priest then takes a kind of staff in his hand, and they solemnly walk round repeating formulas, and after a time the mock money is set fire to, and the instant it is consumed each tile is broken ~~by~~ blows from the staves, and each priest seizes and rushes off with ~~as~~ many of the paper figures as he can grasp, the attendants beating gongs and firing crackers to frighten the devil away, should he ~~at-~~tempt to follow them.

After this burglarious effort on the part of the priests the ~~re-~~latives are quite satisfied that the departed one is out of limbo, or ~~if~~ he isn't that's his look-out, as they have done all they can.

We all know how common superstition is among the Norwegia~~ns~~ and Germans generally. Not a mountain but has its gnome, not ~~a~~ stream or an element of any kind but has its spirit; not a cold night passes without certain viands being placed outside each homeste~~ad~~ for the regalement of Nipo, the demon of frost, and no doubt mu~~ch~~ appreciated by him (or some one else), for they are nearly always go~~ne~~ in the morning.

Take what country you will, whether east or west, north ~~or~~ south, and we find that 'magic lore' has its sway nearly always ~~over~~ a certain portion of the people. The teachings of religion are not ~~al-~~ways turned to, but the lower orders hail with delight anything mys-~~terious~~, and in spite of what education has done and may do, ~~there~~ will always be some belief in 'Signs and Tokens.'

C. F. F. WOODS.

## A LIFE'S LOVE

BY THE REV. M. G. WATKINS, M.A., AUTHOR OF 'AN M.D.'S TALE,' 'A ROMANTIC INCIDENT,' ETC.

IN TWO PARTS :—PART I.

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### CHAPTER I. AN ENGLISH INTERIOR.

OF all things on a May morning commend me to fishing; not to watching your float on a muddy pond, sitting 'dully sluggardised,' as Shakespeare has it, in a punt that smells as vilely of yesterday's catch as a Dogger-Bank smack. Mine be the fly-rod of my heart, light as a girl's thoughts, pliant as the lissome figure of sweet seventeen; and let me wander on a day like this down Hayes Brook. How cheerily the stream floats on, breaking into laughing ripples round this corner, almost asleep in the shade of those bulrushes, but darting swiftly by the next reach as if ashamed of itself for loitering! *Me judice*, cricket is hateful until June. You are no sooner at the wicket, with your eye well in, just beginning to make runs, when a lashing shower comes; off the men scamper to the tent; you must liquor-up while waiting for a lull, and when it comes at last, the first ball takes your middle stump. Somehow or other the weather is never fickle in May by Hayes Brook. I wonder if it runs through those hills, bluer than Rowbotham ever painted in this midday glow, to the happy valley of Avilion, where never rages elemental war. Ah, what a lovely bit of colour is that! Those flaunting yellow irises contrast so well with the deep crimson.

'Shade of Walton, I have missed him!' Hitherto Harry Dundas had been dreamily soliloquising—as the true angler is wont to do—in the meadow-paths edging Hayes Brook. Now he is wide awake, long before the circling ripples have died out where a crafty trout had sulkily flapped his tail, disgusted with the sham fly that had lured him from his lair behind the willow stump. He knew it was no manner of use trying any farther seductions there, so passed on to where the flags rustled gently over a deeper pool. Stealthily the line flutters over the water, and the tail-fly gently stirs its glassy surface and hovers for an instant ere the other flies descend.

Nettled at his clumsiness by the willow, Harry puts forth his skill here to some purpose. Before the instant ends, a perceptible shadow darts from the flags and seizes the fluttering gnat; simultaneously Dundas moves his wrist, and away down the pool with a whirr and a splash dashes the trout, like a greyhound from its leash. The steel is safe in its palate, and after a smart struggle he capitulates, and is lifted out in the angler's landing-net.

'A pound and a half at least,' observes Dundas as he wipes his brow. 'Not so bad, considering what a glare there is on the water at present.'

'Good-morning, Mr. Dundas. That was very prettily done. The rector himself might envy your scientific throw.'

Startled at these words, uttered in a merry tone, the angler turned and saw two ladies watching him from a stile on the opposite bank, where the brook made a sudden bend.

'Very glad to see you once more, Miss Janet. What a lovely day you have chosen for your walk, Miss Marshall! Let me doff my cap before the two nymphs of the brook.'

'Pray, don't,' said the younger lady saucily; 'you might have a *coup de soleil*, the sun is so hot. You will not do much more good till the afternoon now, so you had better escort us home to lunch.'

'Delighted—that is to say, if home means to your father's *château margaux*! But how come you, Miss Janet, to know so much about fly-fishing?' continued the young man, as he wound up his tackle.

'O, she has been taking lessons yesterday from Mr. Stone,' replied Miss Marshall. 'Lady Hayes never sends clergymen tickets for fishing here till Lent ends, so our worthy rector has been indemnifying himself for this enforced self-denial most vigorously since Easter. Janet met him by the Globe preserves yesterday.'

'I wish I had been in his place,' said Dundas, 'to have had the honour of teaching the gentle art to your sister.'

'I should not have profited equally by your lessons, and should only have caught your easy habit of wasting time. I am almost broiled while I have been talking to you, and poor Hester is so hungry that we had better go on and leave you to follow,' returned Janet. 'If we had only met Mr. Stone again to-day, we should have been half way home by this time.'

Dundas answered this sally by retiring a few yards and clearing the brook at a leap. This, though not so wide as Christopher North's celebrated feat at Oxford of jumping the Cherwell, was yet quite enough to restore him to Janet's good graces. Ladies, especially if they are young, value, at what moralists doubtless deem a disproportionate estimate, the display of bodily strength on the part of one of the opposite sex. So in great spirits the three crossed the meadows towards Langton House. Through a belt of firs they passed into the shrubbery, and emerged by a fernery arranged with exquisite taste.

'Look at these pretty varieties, Mr. Dundas!' exclaimed the elder lady. 'Here is *Cambricum*, and that gem *Lastrea cristata*.'

'In my poor judgment,' he replied, 'fern varieties, which are more or less of monstrosities after all, are never comparable to nature's simpler and normal forms. These are certainly beautiful

ommon ; but their beauty strikes me as resembling the arms of manner and sentiment which an artless girl acquires in society.'

But, you prefer the ordinary graces of ferndom, and utterly without skill,' said Janet. 'Well, a queen of curds and cream is not so difficult to find, to follow up your comparison, only I fear they are as romantic as the name sounds, having generally very red cheeks and being apt to bawl at their kine.'

'I take to the gentle swain's crook,' he returned, 'I shall have to seek an appropriate shepherdess.'

'I shiver for you both,' laughed Janet. 'Fancy proposing to go out at five o'clock in the morning,' at all events philandering in the open air at that hour even in May, as seems from Claribel's song to be the case.'

'I am sure Paris ought to be told when he seeks his *Ænone* to go out at these seasonable hours. Mr. Stone,' he continued with a smile, 'has already seen it already.'

'I have just seen it,' and her sister observed: 'Here comes Bell with her usual cheerful tale. Well, has my pony at last leapt the hedge and got into the peas?'

'No, miss,' replied the old gardener, touching his hat; 'but I have just come from whoame.'

'I went on, and entering through the conservatory, stepped over the arbour of jasmine and roses into the dining-room, where I was seated at lunch Mr. Marshall, a country squire devoted to long stories and bad puns; his wife, a comely matron whose face was of a good-nature; the 'Mister John' aforementioned, dusty and a companion whom he hastened to introduce to his friend Captain Gibbs, a tall and athletic man with a huge beard and a friendly eye. All this time I have never described the Misses Marshall, but the talk is much too animated for it to be done now.'

'I shall see you again, Dundas,' said John. 'Many trout in the pond this year?'

'I have had many, thanks to your father sending that poacher, Mr. Stone, to prison.'

'I have heard the name Burke for a poacher, isn't it, Captain Gibbs?' said the entertainer. 'Burke and Hare ever since that bad business in Edinburgh have been inseparably connected.'

'I wish that execrable joke, papa,' exclaimed Janet; 'and I am sure it is (of course making game of him) that he was rightly punished when he was imprisoned for his evil deeds.'

'I am sorry to hear of it all,' Mrs. Marshall breaks in. 'Mr. Dundas, you will not dine? Mr. Stone is coming.'

'I cannot, but my present costume is hardly fit for dinner, and I must go to see Miss Janet at croquet this afternoon.'



‘Very well, then it is settled that you stay. We will send over to Milldale for your carpet-bag.’

‘Is croquet still in existence down here, Miss Marshall?’ asked the Captain of Janet.

‘Still! We are not inclined to desert our favourites down here, Captain Gibbs, as we will show you after lunch—that is to say,’ she archly continued, ‘if you are not afraid of playing with the aborigines *down here*, as if Langton were the end of the world!’

‘For my part,’ says Dundas, ‘all my world is at Langton.’

‘Very well,’ exclaimed Hester (as we will call the elder Miss Marshall), ‘Captain Gibbs, papa, and I will take Janet, you, and John.’

And a right tough game it was, ending in the utter discomfiture of Janet’s side. The Captain was irresistible, calculating each stroke in an instant, looking at least three strokes ahead, and seldom or never missing a ball; qualities invaluable in a croquet-player. Janet’s colour deepened as the interest culminated, while her large violet eyes flashed with animation as she cast out right and left her brilliant *jeux d’esprit*, and the merry dimples of her saucy mouth came and went at every sentence, as the light flashes on summer waves. Tall, lithe, and elegant in figure, with long white hands and delicate flaxen hair, she never looked better than on the croquet-lawn. Dundas and the Captain drank deep and dangerous draughts of her beauty. The former had long known and loved her with a fervour which he could not but deem reciprocal. As for Captain Gibbs, perhaps he only shared the usual fate of those who fluttered round her, in being burnt to the quick with her winsomeness.

It fell to Dundas’s lot to take Hester Marshall in to dinner. There was a great contrast in the sisters’ beauty: Hester had more intellect in her dark lustrous eyes, and altogether more reticence of character than the merry Janet. Like the rose-bud which nestled in the folds of her simple *coiffure*, her emotions withdrew somewhat from the public gaze, but were all the truer and finer when once discovered. Of the one you would say, that she required a long and arduous winning; Janet at once carried you into captivity by the mere witchery of her charms. Dundas talked of the Academy, which he had seen two days before. Millais’s parting of the Roman soldier from his Keltic love was the picture of that year. ‘It reminds me in the lady’s weird beauty,’ he said, ‘of Titian’s Bella Donna in the Vatican.’

‘But surely her fixed look and stern expression must be exaggerated, from what I have heard of it. Women cannot wear such a perfection of stoicism at such a moment.’

‘Some grand heroic souls amongst them can,’ he replied. ‘You cannot fancy Boadicea or—or—Queen Elizabeth melting into Cleopatra or Fair Rosamond’s bursts of affection.’



'As for the latter, we women are not proud of her; her conduct Mary of Scotland showed that she had no heart; and as for Boacæa, you cannot tell how she broke down in private, as so many her martyred women have had to do at all times.'

'Ah, yes! I believe you women all like what you call the luxury a good cry.'

'That depends on its cause; but no one could ever fancy the eltic lady of the picture warming into an anxious look, much less shedding a tear.'

'For my part,' said Dundas, 'I hope no woman will ever shed ars for me; I don't believe I am worth one, and I like the heroic nception of Millais's, and of art generally, better than the heroics common life—scenes, reproaches, tears, hysterics.'

'I do not think, Mr. Dundas,' replies Hester with a slight blush, 'that you would ever give occasion for these weaknesses.'

'Ah!' he returns with a mouthful of oyster-patty, 'my heart, re my mouth, is too full to thank you for the compliment.'

As for Mr. Stone, he was fully occupied in detailing to Mrs. Marshall the enormities of a vestry-meeting in the neighbouring parish, which had actually closed the church-doors on its own parson. After much mutual commiseration, that topic ended by the good old dy's exclaiming, 'I don't know what the church will come to soon!' e platitude which most naturally suits such an anecdote on such an occasion.

'I wish,' remarked the Captain, 'that a new Act of Uniformity uld be passed to compel parsons to shorten their sermons.'

'And yet many officers are actually invading our pulpits and emselves preaching,' returns Mr. Stone.

'They ought rather to invade the bishops' thrones,' chimes in e worthy host; 'a charge ought to make them feel quite at home! ! ha!'

When the men entered the drawing-room, Dundas sauntered up Janet, who sat behind a huge bouquet of exotics, and took his ce beside her.

'Ah, Miss Marshall, what a jolly time we had of it last com-moration! Do such felicities come twice in a lifetime?'

'Judging from your yawn, I should say that you would not care it they should come again.'

'Shall I ever forget that last waltz?—at least, if *you* can,' he lied, 'I never can. Ask the sun to forget the roses rather, or moon to cease to drown the Isis in her own silver beams.'

'I declare you are quite poetic to-night.'

'No wonder, when I am near such a vision of beauty.'

'Yes, it is a sweet group of gloxinias; and what a lovely fringe of crimson-leaved dracæna they are set in!' says Janet with well-ected calmness.

'How can you jest at the ruin you have caused! Ah, Miss Marshall, shall we not end suspense to-night? Say, Janet! if I ask—'

'Hullo, Dundas, old boy!' calls out John, 'what do you say to some music? Here is Hester ready with the overture to *Laetitia* at the piano; where's your flute?'

Under cover of the melody, Captain Gibbs took his place; and if he had been charmed at croquet with Janet's grace, he was enchanted now with her conversation, always animated as it was, often sparkling.

'So you are passionately fond of waltzes, Miss Marshall?—that means that you can outdance even a young ensign.'

'Whenever my partner halts to take breath, I tell him mine is the spirit of the Laureate's brook—'

'Men may come, and men may go,  
But I flow on for ever.'

'Ah! you should have lived in Scandinavia; there was perpetual hunting for the men in its Walhalla, and, by parity of reasoning, I make no doubt that the happy fair ones there floated through the mazes of a dreamlike waltz that perpetually renewed itself in doubly sweet strains.'

'What a romantic conception! and you, Mr. Stone, you might have joined us as a dancing dervish!'

'When I am allowed to hand you to the piano for a song,' exclaimed the gallant clergyman, 'I find that dancing attendance upon you is sufficient happiness for the present.'

'Very well; I have not courage enough to plead a cold this lovely weather, so for once I will gratify you.'

And she sang Marguerite's Soliloquy while putting on Faust's earrings in Gounod's entrancing opera, with such depth of taste and feeling that the Captain, the clergyman, and Dundas were alike rapturous in their admiration. The Captain resumed his place by her side when Janet sat down, plying her with small talk, and delighted at her replies, if one might judge from the marked attention he paid her. Meanwhile John and his mother were discussing a proposal for a fishing party on the following Friday.

'I say, Gibbs,' called out the former, 'what do you say to a day at the Pavilion water? It is a large sheet in my father's woods, some six miles off. They are going to let off the water on Friday; we might take luncheon—the girls would go with us; eh, Janet?—and have a picnic.'

'The very thing,' exclaimed Hester, 'if this weather would only continue!'

'I will give up the board of guardians that day,' chimed in Mr. Marshall; 'there was only Ferrers there with me last week, and I fancy that we were both of us too much bored to try it again at present.'

‘I shall be very happy to go,’ said the Captain, smoothing his moustache. ‘I suppose you will take some fine pike?’

‘Probably there will be one or two good ones. Dundas, you can come over for Friday?’

‘Delighted,’ replied he, with a look at Janet which the Captain did not like, particularly when the latter smiled and began captivating her old lover by the fireplace with a long string of questions she wished answered relating to her aviary.

‘Good-night then, Captain Gibbs,’ said Mrs. Marshall. ‘I hope John will find you some amusement till Friday, and then we ladies will have our turn to be amused at the Pavilion water.’

‘Good-night, Miss Marshall;’ and with marked politeness he held the door for Janet, as Dundas and her mother passed out chatting.

Hester and Mr. Stone were talking over the new certificated mistress, and the former lingered a moment to hear about her powers of maintaining discipline.

‘Ah, Miss Marshall,’ exclaimed Dundas as he met Janet in the hall on leaving her mother, ‘are you not going to wish me good-night?’

She started and blushed; for she had not seen him, and had been thinking as she passed on of the Captain’s *empressement* in shaking hands, and of his earnest looks during the evening.

‘We have known each other too long for you to ask such a cruel question, have we not?’ and she put her hand in his.

‘Janet, good-night, and all good fairies watch you!’ and he retained her hand. ‘Give me a tender thought sometimes.’

‘Can you doubt me?’ she said softly, suffering her lover to retain his prize.

‘You don’t know how often I see you in my dreams, or you would not waste a thought on others.’

‘You ought not to speak so,’ and she hastily drew back; ‘our long acquaintance should have taught you better.’

‘You are not offended? Pardon my vehemence, Janet! ’twas only the excess of my love;’ and he tried to take the soft little hand once more.

‘Now, then,’ and her father’s voice was heard loudly from the drawing-room, ‘what do you think of making a move, Captain, to the billiard-room?’

‘Hush! there are the men coming!’ and Janet caught his hand, gave it one squeeze, and ran upstairs, leaving Dundas disconsolate, but turning ere she disappeared to fling him a smile.

‘What a girl she is!’ he reflected, as the men joined him; ‘by Jove, that last look was worth a king’s ransom!’

He went on to the billiard-room, and as Mr. Stone had now left, the four men settled down to whist and cigars.

'Half-crown points, eh, Dundas?' said Mr. Marshall.

'Quite agreeable.'

And they cut for partners. The host and Dundas were pitted against John and the Captain. The latter had a run of luck, seemed never at a loss for trumps, and backed-up his partner's play, which was never brilliant, so successfully, that they easily vanquished their opponents.

Then they changed sides, John and Dundas being together. Still the Captain's wonderful luck clung to him, and they ended tolerably late in the small hours by paying their adversaries more than either cared to lose. The host was radiant.

'I say, Jack, your playing has not improved of late; we country fellows can tackle you, though you are fresh from Boodle's.'

'Fortune, sir, is a confounded jade,' said he in a disgusted tone as he flung away his cigar end. 'Now, Dundas, let me show you to your room, if you won't try another tumbler.'

Dundas did not say much till they reached his room, when he suddenly emerged from a brown study.

'Come in here, John. Where did you pick up the gallant Captain?'

'What, Gibbs? O, I met him in a man's rooms in Jermyn-street several times; he has seen a good deal of the world, and has been serving last in the Canada mounted police. He is an enthusiastic shot, and tells better tiger stories than any fellow I ever knew.'

'Did you ever play with him before?'

'Not I. We have been to Greenwich once or twice, and I saw him once at Lady Clellan's drum. That is all I know of him. He wanted some fishing, so I brought him down here for a few days -'

'Did you notice his twist?'

'Ah, he's not a bad fellow at his knife and fork!'

'No, no, you mistake me; did you see his neat play?'

'Does my pocket feel lighter than it did? Yours can answer that question too.'

'I say, Jack; I saw—but a man may speak his mind here, eh?'

'Walls have ears, but certainly not in my father's house: what on earth do you mean? I am horribly sleepy. Good-night, old fellow!' and he passed out.

'Jack, here!' Dundas seized his hand, and whispered: 'I saw the gallant Captain mark the aces with his thumb-nail. Jack, we have been done. Mind what you are about with him. Good-night, don't kick me to-morrow!' and he slammed the door.

'Whew-ew!' whistled long and low the astonished John as he stood in the passage running his fingers through his hair, the mellow light of morn dimming his candle and showing his pale face; 'Whew-ew!' Then he sought his bed.

## CHAPTER II.

## BEWARE OF WHITE WAISTCOATS.

One morning Captain Gibbs was radiant. Attired in a white waistcoat, and bearing in his buttonhole the first rose-bud of the year, he came through the breakfast-room window in time to salute the ladies when they came downstairs. He had taken a turn in the shrubbery and even inspected the poultry-yard, and was engaged in an animated conversation respecting the merits of Black Spanish hens with Mr. Marshall, when Dundas and John entered the room, looking, sooth to say, unrefreshed by their short nap. He greeted them merrily, and kept the party amused till the arrival of the post-bag; an interval which is occasionally as unimportant at breakfast as the space between the removal of the courses. There had been a debate in the House the previous day on the confederation of our North American provinces; and Captain Gibbs was able, from having seen service in Canada, to relate anecdotes on the feelings the natives bore to our rule, which naturally led into recitals of elk-hunting on snow-shoes, and an adventure in which he had been the hero; and all this amused the ladies. John and his father opened their letters. Dundas could not resist the Captain's charming: he was pleasant, social, chatty, and was leading the conversation, interesting Janet more than he could see, and even distracting Hester's attention, as Dundas in vain tried to engage her in speculations on the new bedding. He fancied he must have been mistaken in his suspicions; it was impossible that a man of such frank soldier-like bearing could have descended to cheating at cards. Then he began to feel comfortable for having communicated his ideas on the point to Mr. Marshall. Few fellows like having their friends calumniated with such an accusation as he had made against the Captain—it was lucky that John had not called him out. He crossed the table at that worthy; but he was immersed in his reading, and only ceased reading at times to investigate still more closely the inside of a pigeon-pie. Evidently he was thinking of Harry rather than Harry's alarming statement made to him in an unceremonious manner last night. Doubtless he had forgotten all about it; John always was unsuspecting, might he not be a headstrong fellow? Perhaps he thought the copious libations of the breakfast-room might have had their effect upon his, Harry's. That was a still more intolerable thought to him. At any rate he could behave as usual, say nothing more on a subject he wished now that he had never broached, and keep his eye on the Captain. It is so much easier too, he reflected, to make an accusation than to verify it. On his way down to break-



fast he had slipped into the billiard-room, and slyly opening the bookcase drawer, had examined the packs of cards used the previous evening. Keenly did he scrutinise them in the balmy morning air, with the bright sunshine at the open window falling full upon their backs; but no more traces of marking or scratches were discernible than would be discovered on any others after a night's play. Clearly he had been a suspicious fool, and the least said about it all the better.

'I say, Gibbs,' observed John, 'tell the girls that story about the Minnesota Lake now you are speaking about snow.'

'O, it is nothing,' said he, looking grave; 'perhaps too it hardly suits so sunny a morning. May I give you some more marmalade, Miss Marshall?'

'After you have told me the story,' replied Janet: 'do you not know that that is the only way of appeasing a woman's curiosity?'

'Well, if you will, you shall have the tale, which actually happened; but it is a sad one—indeed I am the survivor in the very painful incident to which it relates, so you will let me tell the story impersonally. A. went out on a snow-shoe expedition after deer with B., and it was to last a week or so. Coming to the Minnesota Lake on the third day, they exchanged their snow-shoes for skates as the ice was tolerably clear. As they neared an island known to be a 'yard' where moose congregated (assembled, that is, for winter quarters), B. skirted the other side, while A. remained patiently on this one waiting for the crack of the other's rifle, when he was immediately to single out his own victim as the terrified herd escaped. A. remained at his post till half an hour passed by; then he waited another half hour, till his blood congealed, and the chattering of his teeth was the only sound that broke the intense and awful silence which characterises the great woods in winter. At length he followed his companion's trail. He skated a hundred yards on the other side of the brushwood which edged the island' (and here the Captain's voice faltered); 'he came suddenly to a round hole thinly skinned over with ice. You can guess the rest, Miss Marshall; but you can never tell what A.'s feelings were, and I hope you may never experience anything in the remotest degree resembling them. My unhappy friend was lost, drowned in a moment, and his body drawn under by the onward set of the lake.'

'How very dreadful, Captain Gibbs!' exclaimed Janet, with a tear suffusing her eyes. 'Was B. young, or an old man?'

'Twenty-three, Miss Marshall, and engaged to a young lady at the cantonments, who became distracted when the intelligence was brought to her.'

'Poor thing! but how did A. get home?'

'Pray excuse A. if he really does not know how that horrid week passed.'

‘Ah!’ said John, ‘A., as you call him, passed through what would have killed most men fifty times over. He knew nothing of the country; his unfortunate friend had gone down with the only compass they possessed, and all the tobacco and matches. A. was at least thirty miles, as the crow flies, from home. He was well-nigh starved to death, to say nothing of the horror of his situation, and the loss of his friend in such a fearful manner. He could only shoot one willow-grouse during the whole week during which he wandered in the woods, till at length by a circuitous route he stumbled back, footsore, blind from the snow-blink, and very near the confines of insanity. He had caught two ermine in snares made of the hairs of his own beard (which, as you see, is somewhat long), and they, together with the grouse and the young shoots of the willow, were his only food, till, like a much-enduring hero who will never give in, he was found eight days after the occurrence fainting and frost-bitten on the verge of the cantonments. The brain-fever which followed was also weathered successfully, and I am glad to say A. never looked in better health than does Captain Gibbs at present.’

Janet’s looks were full of sympathy and admiration as her brother ended, and the Captain acknowledged the compliments he had paid him. Again Dundas saw her face, and made his determination accordingly. He could not stand the house while Gibbs was there. Because chance had never granted to him to be more of a hero than to pull in the winning eight at Henley, Janet forsooth must bestow all her admiration on the first real hero, though quite a stranger, whom she met. It was too bad, considering what she had been to him and how long they had been intimate with each other.

Accordingly, after lunch that day he went home, on the understanding that he was to rejoin the party on Friday at the Pavilion water. Meanwhile the Captain was very happy at Langton, making himself agreeable to the family, but fascinating Janet. It was difficult for a young and sympathetic woman to remain unmoved before those full dark eyes of his and that lustrous beard, which lent such an air of gravity to features which in themselves were striking and dignified. Much as Janet loved Dundas, I fear it was only with that affection which, while it transcends sisterly feelings in its warmth and tenderness, has not yet passed into the enthusiastic self-abandonment with which a woman gives the fulness of her heart to its idol. As Harry’s star paled, so the Captain’s hourly waxed brighter, during those two or three intensely happy days that he spent beside Janet. At length there ensued that break which always disturbs young love. On the morning of the fourth, the Captain expressed his extreme vexation at having to return next day to London, owing to an important business communication which he had just received, nor should he be able to return for the 6th. Janet said nothing, though the blood ran back cold to her heart; but the others were loud in

their disappointment. John suggested writing a line to those rascally fellows the lawyers, who were always interfering with a man—'confound them! Hamlyn had told him that they found him out last August at his moor near John o' Groat's House, and actually recalled him to town.' Mrs. Marshall thought the best thing would be to postpone the picnic till next month, if Captain Gibbs could return, in which he professed his willing acquiescence. So word was sent over to Dundas that the party at the Pavilion water was put off till the first week in June; and next morning the Captain departed for London.

Quickly the sunny hours slipped away with opening blossoms and twittering birds, and May passed into the full flush of June's beauty. The Captain arrived at Langton on the second. Next morning, the day of the picnic, broke with unclouded sky, effectually allaying all misgivings on the score of weather. In great spirits the Marshalls and Captain Gibbs drove in a mail phaeton, while John trotted alongside, to the Pavilion water. They found a small tent pitched by the banks of the lake, and the butler waiting to greet them with a cider-cup, prepared after the manner of an Oxford 'nightcap,' from a recipe which he had obtained of Dundas. That worthy speedily emerged from the tent, where he had been occupied in compounding some other notable drink, and all proceeded towards a woodland walk which led, under the shade of firs, yews, and at one place an avenue of magnificent beeches, to the head of the lake. Mr. Marshall senior was in high good humour, having taken a holiday for the nonce from the board. The conversation soon turned upon a banquet which had lately been given in London, whereat all the dishes were composed of horse-flesh, each more cunningly devised than the other.

'How fitly, Captain,' he observed, addressing Gibbs, 'did the cooks send in *hors-d'œuvres* instead of *entremets*!'

'Now, papa,' exclaimed Janet, 'I warn you, that if you will make such bad jokes, I shall respond to them by a horse-laugh.'

'Good, miss. See what it is to have studied under a master in the art. Did you notice, Dundas, that the ingenuity of the *chefs* could not devise dessert of the animal, though they had *potage, consommé, roti*, and all the rest of the courses composed of horse? The fish was even served *avec huile hippophagique*, whatever that may be. Now I should suggest for the next banquet dessert of candied mares'-tails, horse-chestnuts, and hips and *hairs*. Ha, ha, ha!' and he laughed loud and long, as old gentlemen are apt to do at their own jokes.

'Well, Mr. Marshall,' observed the Captain, 'did you hear it was much remarked upon also that they had no poultry or game, which is wonderful, considering the resources of the culinary art? Many an unfortunate cat is eaten at Naples by tourists who will

have hare. At the next equine feast some one ought to provide the guests with a horse that died *game*, or a cutlet of horse-hair, in order to fill the *carte*.'

'Punning seems infectious, Captain Gibbs,' said Mrs. Marshall.

While Dundas, determined not to be outdone, exclaimed :

'I heard that, at the end of the evening, one man who had forgotten to tip the waiter at Christmas presented him with a horse-box instead; that two more, rather excited, fought on their way home, one being put effectually *hors de combat*; and that all the company had nightmare during their slumbers, and found themselves decidedly *hoarse* next morning.'

'Come, come, Dundas!' broke in John, when the laughter had subsided, 'don't ride the subject to death, but help me to rig out this canoe.'

At the head of the water was a dam cutting off about a hundred yards of it; and here the water had been let off by two or three keepers, who were in attendance at the sluice, till not more than a foot of it remained. A great number of pike, carp, and tench could be observed sailing round this confined space, and the sight fired John's ardour for sport. One man was sent to his cottage for an eel-spear, armed with which the gallant experimentalist pushed off in a nutshell of a canoe, and essayed, amidst the laughter of the rest, to capture an enormous pike which remained at one corner in a deeper pool. After many attempts crowned with indifferent success, John urged his canoe swiftly after the creature, which was making for the centre of the pond; then, dropping the paddle, seized the spear, and delivered a lunge at it with such hearty good will that he lost his balance, and went head first into the shallows. Amidst the roars of the party he emerged caked with black mud from head to foot, and waded discomfited to land.

'I shall return to Langton and change, sir,' he said, addressing his father, 'and be here in time to escort you back in the evening.'

'You can't do better,' returned Mr. Marshall. 'That last stroke of yours may be called a *home thrust*, eh?'

Then they strolled round to the tent; and heavy was the assault made upon the potted viands, pies, and hams. Nor was the Château Margot forgotten, much to the delight of Dundas; or the Moselle, to which the Captain addicted himself, declaring that it was the wine of wines for an *al-fresco* dinner. He had managed to secure a place next Janet, and was evidently happy. Not so Dundas, who was attending to the wants of Mrs. Marshall, and talking over the last new system of drainage with her husband. Mr. Stone (who made his appearance just before dinner) occupied a seat next Hester. Presently he said :

'Dundas, you look very pale.'

'I have a slight headache; but it is nothing much. Heat often affects me.'

'Come, Hester,' said Mr. Marshall, 'can you not cure him?'

'I think you had better apply to Janet, papa,' she replied, with a meaning smile at her sister.

'O, Hester!' exclaimed Janet, 'you forget I am not a believer in homœopathy. Open your case, dear, and see if you have no remedy for a headache.'

'Pray remember that your patient is an utter unbeliever in Hahnemann,' put in Dundas. 'He has seized one sound principle indeed, and that is, that you cannot take too little of all medicines.'

'Silence, scoffer!' said Hester, and drew out of her pocket, much to the other's amusement, a morocco-leather case containing some fifty delicate little phials, each holding infinitesimally small globules of divers coloured drugs.

'Ah,' observed Stone, 'bread *ad lib.*, and *quantum suff.* of aqua pump.'

'You joining the enemy too, Mr. Stone!' rejoined the fair leech, with a look which at once reduced the recreant to his allegiance; and then she opened a miniature Guide, which the case also held, and, running her finger down, stopped at the word 'Headache,' reading aloud, 'May arise from various causes, such as cold, congestion of the brain, derangement of the pulmonary—'

'Pray stop, Miss Marshall, before you terrify me to death,' exclaimed her victim. 'My headache is totally different—it proceeds from heat.'

'Just so. Here, at all events, is the cure;' and she placed in the palm of his hand three pillules taken from the bottles, answering to the mystical names, 'Puls. ignat. coff. nux v.'

'Ladies' medicines,' whispered Stone; 'wouldn't do a baby any harm.'

And Dundas swallowed them with an abundance of wry faces, and an instant pull at a claret-cup which the compassionate butler had ready at his hand.

'Now I vote,' said he, 'that Stone tries some. He has been laughing at them, you know, Miss Marshall. Let me see. He is suffering from a mild form of suppressed fever—a heart-affection we will call it. Give him belladonna, sambucus, and rhus tox for that.'

'Now, Mr. Stone,' observed Hester, cloaking her confusion under the administration of her drugs, 'take it like a man.'

And the unfortunate parson once more had to rebel.

'Give something to the gallant Captain instead,' he remonstrated.

'All right,' said he, nothing daunted; 'I will take bottle for bottle of the drugs against you. What say you, eh?'

'I call it a system of humbug,' observed Mr. Marshall. 'Now



suffering from intolerable thirst ; but I am for none of your  
 es, Hester. Here, Barker, bring me the claret-cup.'  
 and then, as we used to read in Horace, *solvuntur tabulae risu*,  
 arty separated to fish or stroll.

gain was Dundas defeated in his desire to join Janet, inas-  
 as the sisters, with Stone and the Captain, wandered away  
 her into the mazes of the wood, and he fancied that there might  
 e too many if he joined them. So he was obliged to content  
 hf with trolling, while Mr. Marshall smoked a cigar on the bank  
 encouraged him in his efforts. Fortune was for once, however,  
 s side : he caught a pike almost as large as that voracious fish  
 a snapped and barked at Mr. Briggs of sporting fame.

The coolness of evening was perceptible as the couples came in  
 fter the other from their woodland walk, each professing great  
 ishment at having lost the other, and the ladies, with flushed  
 s and glittering eyes, roundly accusing one another of ignorance  
 alities, as is the wont of most couples in such a situation.  
 as saw what it all meant, and bit his lip in anger. Janet was  
 ng on the Captain, as if he were already her own property,

Mr. Stone covered his own retreat by chaffing Dundas. A  
 p-cup was discussed before the tent was struck and the party  
 to their horses ; and if the Captain had been agreeable before,  
 w became tenfold more fascinating to the ladies by his gaiety  
 ttention to all their little wants. A song was proposed before  
 g, or, to put it in the language Dundas used in pressing his  
 st upon Janet, she was asked 'to fling a ballad to the wander-  
 moon,' but declined, and begged the Captain, with eyes even  
 eloquent than her words, to favour them instead. Nothing  
 accordingly he proceeded to put the finishing stroke to poor  
 r's discomfiture by singing the following verses, in a rich voice  
 old even more of nature than cultivation :

#### REGRETS.

A cherish'd bunch of faded flowers,  
 A tangled maze of sunny hours,  
 Streams that have join'd the distant sea,  
 Voices that long have ceased to be—  
 O, for some wizard's cunning lore,  
 To wake these in their prime once more !

Vain, ah, how vain, the deepest sighs,  
 Ghosts from that past can never rise !  
 Songs, kisses, tears, last words once sped,  
 On life no more their fragrance shed ;  
 No echo floats from that far bourne,  
 Where sleeps at peace man's love, man's scorn.

Yet sometimes Fancy weaves her spell,  
 Dreams golden days bring back too well ;  
 Kind Memory oft restores the face,  
 That left no rival in its place,

And dulls the accents Anger spoke,  
At which a heart—too faithful—broke.

In the dead of the night that followed the picnic, when Dundas had left for home, and all the inhabitants of Langton had been for a couple of hours plunged in dreamy forgetfulness, a tall man, who carried a policeman's bull's-eye in one hand and a serviceable 'jemmy,' bright and glittering like a pet weapon, in the other, might have been observed stealthily making his way along the passage leading to Mr. Marshall's study. Gently pushing open the door, he turned on the full light of his lantern and leisurely inspected the room. There was not much fear visible in his face, but great resolution was printed on those tightly-closed lips and thick-set brows. He laid his hand on an *escritoire* covered with papers, and musingly touched the lock with his jemmy. 'No, he would not keep money in a place so difficult to be reached from his writing-table;' so he turned to a small library desk that faced the window, and unerringly choosing the centre top drawer, proceeded to apply the jemmy. 'No need for this,' he meditated; 'something a little quieter will crack the crib as well or better.' So he laid down his steel crowbar and applied a skeleton-key of curious construction, which he drew from his pocket, to the lock. It immediately opened, and the drawer displayed two or three divisions filled with silver, and one wherein reposed a wash-leather bag, which held sovereigns. He deliberately counted out twenty of the thirty-two it contained, and eagerly took up a roll of bank-notes, to drop them as suddenly, when he reflected: 'Too risky; the numbers may be known at the bank. Old Marshall indeed would never dream of taking them down. I will indemnify myself with safer coin;' and he took seven more of the sovereigns. Then he half shut the drawer, laid the jemmy and skeleton key carelessly on the floor, as if dropped in a hurry, and advanced to the window which opened on the lawn. He took the little bar which guarded it by the clapper, and quietly laid it on the sofa; then inch by inch, moment by moment, with the greatest care and deliberation to avoid noise or grating, he opened the shutters, cut the blind across with a pair of scissors, and cautiously raised the window to the height sufficient to admit a man. There were a few stalks of mignonette outside, and these he leant out and crumpled up in his hand. This proceeding occupied half an hour, whereas the opening of the drawer had taken one minute. Well-pleased at his handiwork, he cast behind him one look of triumph and retreated upstairs. Before he reached the top, he perceived that dawn would enable him to find the room he had left without difficulty. He closed his lantern, its sickly light would have shown you the resolute countenance, dark eyes, and long beard of our friend tain Gibbs.

Dire was the consternation next morning, when the housemaid



J. A. [illegible] 1891.

THE MYSTERIOUS ROBBERY.



l the open window and a rifled drawer. Mr. Marshall dignant, more perhaps at having been bearded in his own n at the loss of his sovereigns. The butler rather restored brium by reporting all the plate safe, while his colleagues, en, trembled as they told each other that they might have dered in their beds. The village policeman, who resem- w in *Measure for Measure* in being 'a simple constable,' head sagely as he surveyed the open window, and said, ain the thieves got in here: Mr. Twistleton's house at as broke into like this here last week;' and slept better k afterwards, at his penetration in discovering that the re not taken, for fear their numbers might be known. Captain, and Mrs. Marshall strongly advised a detective t for, which was accordingly done. Three days afterwards hall was extremely amazed, on unexpectedly entering his find a burly decisive-looking man, with his hat on, quietly g the window-ledge. 'Hillo, you fellow!' he called out, he had caught the thief on a second visit, and made a dart l. Mr. Harrison immediately placed his back to it, doffed and said, 'Your servant, Mr. Marshall; pray don't excite sir!' and then presented his card. 'We like to do things ny noise, sir; so I walked over from the station, dropped Greyhound, and found out that Baynes (old friend of mine aching line) had seen no pals lately. Then I came across and, from what you said in your note, soon found the low. Sharp dodger, sir, at work here, eh?'

I suppose so,' replied Mr. Marshall.

r, sir, how did the supposed thief open this window from le? There are no marks of violence in the shutters, and ch a thing as get in, without either breaking a pane or entre-bit, can be done by no cracksman alive. You have o one to meddle with the border outside?' 'No.' 'Well, hat the mignonette is only broken as far as an arm from uld reach. There are no footsteps anywhere apparent, no he earth being disturbed. But no foot ever trod on these ; all; in short they were broken from within, not crushed ry boot; notice how sharp and clean the fractured stems an look at this blind: it has been cut from the *inside*, not ill observe by the way in which the jagged edges lie) from le. Have you the tools left behind?'

Marshall produced the jemmy and false key.

' said Harrison, 'just as I thought—Dark-street manu- even-dials—latest improvements; no bungler used these. w they glitter; in what admirable working order they are. ry bumpkin ever remembered to oil his key before use. hall, you have a traitor in the camp. Order your servants



in, that I may look at them. I would almost lay all Bow-street to a new hat that Dick Dungeon has had a hand in this !'

One after the other the domestics entered, each one being keenly scrutinised by the eagle glance of Mr. Harrison, and reduced to the verge of despair whenever he asked them a few simple questions.

'My first supposition is, sir,' he informed Mr. Marshall when the inspection was concluded, 'a false one. I am on the wrong scent : let me ask, beyond the members of your family and the servants whom I have seen, had you any one else sleeping in your house on the night of the robbery ?'

'Let me see ; yes, a friend, Captain Gibbs, was with us on that night : he had business in town and left yesterday. Of course I would as soon suspect my son as my guest, especially when such a one as the Captain.'

'Of course, of course, sir. Then, if it is not the act of your domestics, nor yet of yourselves, it needs no great powers of divination to conclude that some one had secreted himself in the house during the day, on purpose to steal when all was quiet. You see he has taken nothing but sovereigns ; no chance of detecting the culprit, I fear, by his swag. Well, sir, I advise you to make inquiries if any suspicious person is taken up during the next month in your neighbourhood ; I will keep my eyes skinned—beg pardon, sir,—will keep a sharp look-out in town over one or two friends I have long wanted.' And he departed to the servants' hall.

Here he had a chat, as his wont was, with the butler, and learnt that their late visitor was making himself agreeable to Miss Janet. After his meal a sudden thought struck him : lighting a candle, he held the end of the skeleton-key in its flame, and then smelt the fumes. Then he requested the butler to show him to the room the Captain had occupied, pretended to look under the bed, in the cupboards, &c. : gradually he drew closer to the toilette-table, looked in the glass, smelt the eau-de-cologne, took carelessly up a small China jar of pomatum with a London label on it, put his fore-finger in, and smelt that too. It was flavoured with otto of roses. Then he gave a long low whistle : 'Nice stuff this, eh ? made up for the family ?'

'O dear no,' said the factotum, 'the Captain left it till he returns.'

Harrison mused once more. 'Not yet legal proof,—certainty to my own mind ;' shook hands with his guide ; and departed to pursue his clue in London. It might, after all, have nothing to do with the Captain, but *the fumes arising from the key smelt of otto of roses*. It had been oiled with a little of the unguent found on the Captain's dressing-table. Harrison winked hard all the way he walked to the station. Evidently a thought had struck him.

When Dundas called next day, the girls regaled him with the *difference* in decision and procedure between the village functionary

and the London detective. The butler had never dreamt that it was worth while to name the latter's visit to the Captain's room; so it was settled that both men were equally baffled, despite professional skill and experience. Dundas could not see Janet by herself; so soon after took his leave. As he stood in the stable-yard waiting for his steed, he overheard a conversation on the other side of the wall which did not improve his temper during the ride home.

'Have ye heard tell how the Cap'n has fallen in loove wi' Miss Janet, Mr. Bell?' inquired one who was apparently an understrapper of the old gardener.

'That I have,' exclaimed Bell, as he flung up a spadeful of earth, and then halted to meditate in that dreamy posture so dear to gardeners; 'and I could tell ye more by the same token.'

'What is it, then?'

'Whoy, my wife washes, you know, for the family. Well, last Tuesday comes down the Cap'n's things to be washed afore he started for Lunnun town. My wife says to me, says she, "Look at this 'ere white waistcoat o' the Cap'n's." So I looks, and sees a sight o' blue stains on its face. "Now," says she, "look at this 'ere new-fashioned stuff Miss Janet has been wearing this last week for a gown." So I looks again, and sees a blue dress. "Well?" says she. "Well?" says I. "Bell, you be a born natural," says she. "What dy'e think these here stains o' blue on the Cap'n's waistcoat means?" "Maybe," says I, "he's been a-painting o' sketches, and painted hissel." "Noa," she says, says she; "but he's been a-embracing o' Miss Janet!" And I says, "Lawk-a-daisy, then, missus," says I, "he'll be what the leddies call engaged to her, then." "In course he is," says she. "I knows Miss Janet better nor to think her would do the likes o' that, if he wasn't." And then she says, a-laughing at me, "Bell, don't 'ee ever wear a white waistcoat when thou goes a-courting!"'

### CHAPTER III.

#### BRETHREN IN MISFORTUNE.

A FORTNIGHT after the incidents related in the last chapter, Janet Marshall was returning from a visit to an old cottager, by a woodland path that wound along a hill-side overhanging a streamlet, when she met Dundas. The pleasure was mutual at first, though a shade of embarrassment immediately overclouded it. He was naturally somewhat constrained, while she was making up her mind to tell him of her engagement. They had long known each other, however, and he scrupled not to take his arm as the path opened out over an abruptly-shelving descent. For a while they talked of indifferent topics; at length Dundas halted where a thicket of wild-roses overhung their road, and between the giant stems of two pines an enchanting pro-

spect of villages and moorland stretched away from Langton, which lay below shrouded in the midst of woods, towards the far faint mountains of Dartmoor.

'See,' he said, 'does not that view remind you of one of Turner's pictures—say, his Italy? You know how fond he was of enclosing a champaign country within a framework of gloomy pines.'

'It is very lovely for an English landscape,' she replied, 'but not sufficiently steeped in light for one of his semi-ideal pictures.'

'Great part of one's pleasure in looking at a fine view is derived from the colour of our thoughts. There have been times when I have deemed this view a peep into fairyland.'

'I trust there will come such happy days again,' Janet answered rather abstractedly, after a moment's silence.

'Never,' he said decisively, 'never! My Titania will have vanished from that house and left "its chambers vacant of delight."'

'Ah, Mr. Dundas, if you did but know how much I pray for your happiness! Be sure that you have no truer friend—'

'Don't, Janet. I know what you would say. You will go on to tell me that you love me like a sister.'

'And so I do, dearly!' answered she, turning her face towards him, and confronting him with all her beauty. 'Have we not always been like brother and sister?'

He looked long and sadly at her before he replied: 'Could we not forge a dearer and closer link still between us, Janet?'

'It is too late to speak of that now.'

'Janet, you are not really engaged to that—'

'Hush! Yes, I am. My poor Harry, be a man! I could not bear that you should be ignorant of this, and yet I did not know how to tell you of it. Forgive my bluntness; it was done to spare you.' And she laid her soft hand on his arm, as he turned away his head and leaned in irrepressible grief over the gate at which they stood.

'Janet, it was the dream of my life. I have loved you as I think heart never loved before. You moved so beautiful and so kindly before me, like some divinity. I could envy the ground you trod on, and day by day my love welled up all the deeper and stronger from the very depth of my being. And now—O, Janet, has it come to this?'

'Do not wring my heart,' she said sadly.

'My poor father! he doated on you, Janet. It would have been such a delight to him. But I am selfish and unkind; I ought not to forget your feelings. Forgive me, rather.'

'Harry, you will marry some one more worthy of your love than I could ever be, and no one will rejoice more than I shall.'

'Then it is all settled?'

'Yes,' she said simply, looking into the blue distance with strained eyes and closely-set lips.

‘Janet,’ he asked, after a pause, ‘I know that I must say farewell. I cannot wish *him* happiness; and you know your own heart best. Will you grant me a last request? These tresses’ (and he reverentially smoothed the glossy waves of light ash-coloured hair that escaped from under her rustic hat)—‘these tresses have been my guiding-star for years. Do you remember refusing me one when I went to Christ Church? You will not do so again, now you have made trial of what a man’s heart is?’

‘Will you accept one?’ And with eyes dim through tears and trembling lips she drew forth a dainty pair of scissors, and handed them to him.

‘Nay, dear, you must cut it yourself.’

‘You won’t desecrate it,’ replied the poor girl, with a faint attempt at a smile, as she separated a long band from the wavy mass, cut it off, fastened it with a bow of ribbon which decorated her hat, and offered it to Dundas.

He took it slowly and sadly, then once more looked up, and said:

‘And is this all? O, Janet, are all my hopes, all our confidences, to end here? Would that the old times were back again, when I could fling you on my horse, spring up beside you, and emulate the young Lochinvar! I sometimes think that men and women lived true lives in those days, before the social theories of the present age strangled all nature, all loveliness, all freshness out of our souls. No cynic ever loathed the tyranny of the world so much as I do.’

‘O, Harry, hush! Do not rail at existence, when you have a long and noble life, I trust, before you. Reproach me as much as you like; perhaps I deserve it. I am sure,’ she added, in a dreamy tone, ‘that I loved you; but then—then—’

‘Janet, say those words again. Why did you not soften to me when we might have been happy? But now!—’ and he groaned aloud in his anguish and hid his face.

‘My poor Harry, don’t give way; it was to be. And we must not—you must not mind me now. Let me comfort you.’ And once more she laid her hand on his shoulder.

‘Janet’—and with difficulty he suppressed the agonies to which his countenance bore witness but too well as he took her hands—‘Janet, you say you loved me in old days, those golden days when we fished together and rambled through the June woods, our souls entranced with the perfect bliss of being together—you love me a little still in my misery, my despair?’

She smiled through her fast-gathering tears, and looked up at him with a face so full of beauty and devotion, that he caught her wildly to his bosom. Perhaps it was fortunate for all parties that Captain Gibbs was not expected for a fortnight; but successful wooers may well afford their discarded rivals the melancholy satisfaction of saying good-bye when the lady’s heart beats so tenderly and truly



to her affianced lover as did Janet's to the Captain, even in the midst of Harry's passionate embrace. It had given her much pain to make the choice; but once made, she would not go back from her word even in thought. Her faith, indeed, was severely tried when she witnessed Dundas's suffering, and still more as she was surrounded by his arms.

'Janet, Janet,'—and he kissed her unresisting cheek—'I shall take that last look of yours with me. It is worth a broken heart to win such a momentary return of past affection. Farewell'—and he raised his head from the perfumed masses of hair that had fallen on her shoulder—'farewell, dearest! I blame you indeed! I heap every blessing on you. God give you a life as shining as this!' and he once more smoothed the fair tresses and looked fixedly a moment in her eyes. 'Now the bitterness of death is past, darling. Good-bye!' And with one more kiss he sprang over the hedge, dashed into the fern beside the pines, gained their shelter without once looking back, and disappeared. Janet leaned against the gate in a fainting condition, with hopes and fears and longings and remembrances doing wild battle in her breast. There she stood, musing and accusing herself one moment of precipitation, then of treachery, till she woke from her dreams with a start as the sun shot its level beams over the distant landscape, and the dressing-bell tolled forth from the woods of Langton beneath. Then she hurried home, went straight to her room, and sent down word that she had a bad headache, and should not appear at dinner.

Towards the end of June the Captain came down to Langton as an engaged man. John had been called away to the depot of his regiment at York. Naturally, Dundas did not visit the Hall much in those days, till one morning he received a line from Mrs. Marshall begging him to accompany them on July the 6th to another *al fresco* party that they had arranged to Emlyn Head, a well-known promontory where the chalk formation, for almost the last occasion towards the west of England, presents a bold front and scarped precipices to the waves. Nothing should persuade him to go in order to meet that fellow again; such was his first thought. Then he strode up and down his study for a couple of hours, a longing to see Janet once more rising strong and irrepressible within him. Finally love conquered, and he accepted Mrs. Marshall's invitation.

As for the Captain, he spent his time very much as engaged men always do. He loitered by Janet's work-table, chatted with her at the piano, rode, sung, and walked round the grounds with her. Never had Janet looked more lovely, for she had never been so happy as at present. The Captain possessed imperturbable good-nature, much cleverness, and a natural aptitude for pleasing. Of course a room was set apart for the lovers to do their talking in, from which Janet usually emerged with such sparkling eyes and



reathed in so many smiles, that her mother and Hester rejoiced in the match that could bring such happiness to one they loved so well. Mr. Marshall liked the Captain exceedingly: the latter made himself agreeable to him, and discussed politics and local celebrities with heroic self-devotion over the claret, seeing that Janet was waiting for him in the drawing-room.

As the days drew closer to the 6th, on which the expedition to Mlyn had been fixed, Captain Gibbs became somewhat fidgety. He got up frequently from his seat by Janet, and looked out of the window or relapsed into abstraction. At length she observed it. 'What is the matter with my heart's lord?' she asked one morning here is nothing like precision, it was on July the 4th), as she turned her chair from the work-table to the open window, where the Captain was cutting some graceful exotics into shreds with successive lunges of a paper knife. 'Does he sigh for a command in the Japanese expedition?'

'Does the bulbul sigh for anything by the roses of Bendimeer?' and he was by her side in an instant.

'But, dearest, you are not well? Tell me.'

'I believe I want a good gallop; will you accompany me before lunch?'

'Alas, Miss Denning is coming at twelve!' Now that worthy was dressmaker from the county town.

'And you cannot tear yourself from ribbons and *ruches*?'

'Precisely; but do you go alone and brush away the cobwebs by good gallop on the top of Headlam Wold.'

'Very well; there is nothing like exercise;' and he rang the bell and ordered a horse. 'I will come back to wish you good-bye directly, dear. Meanwhile *au revoir*!'

Having gained his room the Captain flung himself down at the writing-table, and penned the following note, which he carefully folded and put in his pocket-book:

'Arthur Gibbs, Langton House, ———shire, to Richard Smith,  
6 Kennet-row, Whitechapel.

'So far well. To-morrow without fail. Dibs plenty. Governor will stump up. Tschkd crrr aotskdm Mnpstrrr. Yschd racho racho y.'

Then he descended and embraced his affianced wife with 'that last kiss which never was the last.' After carefully studying the Ordnance map in the hall he mounted, and rode out of Langton village. Then he took a turn to the right and cantered along a green lane, soliloquising meanwhile, 'It would never do to go to Langton Station; I will strike through these cross lanes to Boynorpe. The great Napoleon won his battles by a forced march. My prize is worth a little extra trouble; a month more and she is

mine! Then, New York and liberty for ever! She is a sweet creature; I feel a better man when she looks at me. Compare her with Kate Stewart or the Duchess! Faugh! Hold a rushlight to the sun!' and so he came out, after an hour's hard riding, in front of the small roadside station of Boynthorpe.

With some difficulty the clerk was roused from a siesta in the booking-office, and the Captain had his note duly telegraphed to London.

'Sleepy country this, eh?' he said to the boy.

'Yes, sir; so sleepy that gentlemen often forgets to take up their change when it's only a shilling.'

'There it is then; now you are wide awake, eh?'

'Servant, sir;' and the lad touched his forehead with his forefinger.

'Tell me, then, the nearest way to Headlam Wold;' and the Captain reached it in time for a good spin along its velvety turf under the ancient beech-trees, before he appeared at Langton as the lunch-bell rang, in time to offer Mrs. Marshall his arm.

Next morning rose all saffron and crimson from the east, har-binger of fine weather for Emlyn on the morrow. The Captain made a good breakfast, and was more than usually facetious in answer to his host's heavy wit. Still he was a little nervous, though his countenance did not betray him. Eleven o'clock struck. 'That fellow Dick is so precious forgetful,' he thought. They adjourned to Janet's boudoir; half-past eleven chimed from her malachite time-piece. 'Confound him,' the Captain muttered to himself, the while he held a skein of silk for Janet. Still he betrayed no impatience. Even when there came a knock at the door he did not start, though he knew what it was.

'What is it, Mary?' asked Janet.

'A letter for the Captain, miss.'

'A telegram! What *can* it be, dear? I hate telegrams so much. Do open it, love.'

'Perhaps the Commander-in-chief wants me at the Horse Guards. Can you spare me? But let us see.'

And he opened it. After a moment his face clouded, and a grave look came over it.

'This is serious, indeed, dear; I may be a ruined man—those rascals had all my patrimony!'

Janet took the telegram, and read:

*'Mr. R. Smith, 282 Lombard-street, to Captain Gibbs,  
Langton House.'*

*'July 5.'*

*'Your lawyers, Brett and Magee, have failed. Debts, 148,000l.; assets, nil. Clients' interests involved. Come up at once.'*

She dropped the paper, and looked him in the face with eyes full of anxiety.

‘Then you must go, love?’

‘Immediately, I fear;’ then after a pause, ‘Janet, what will you do, if I have lost my all?’

‘Could you doubt my love? I will follow you through the world for a smile!’

It was well for Dundas that he could not see the look of rapturous devotion which accompanied this assertion.

‘But to live on my pay, Janet? Consider.’

‘I am not romantic enough to wish for love in a cottage, but with you I would live on bread-and-water, if need were.’

‘It will not be quite so bad as that, I hope.’

‘Besides which, Mr. Doubtful, you have forgotten my settlement. You see,’ she added with a smile, ‘it is not you that give everything henceforth, as I have often felt before now that it has been, when I thought what my love was worth.’

‘Leave me to estimate that. But speaking seriously, dear, I must go, and at once. Smith would not have sent for me except under stress of necessity. What a pity about to-morrow! I am so sorry to disappoint you all again; our picnics seem fated to be marred. I will see your mother, and leave you to make my excuses to Mr. Marshall.’ He took out his watch. ‘I can just catch the 2-20 express.’

And they hurried off to the drawing-room. Great was the consternation when it was explained there that a sudden summons from his confidential man of business in London required the Captain’s immediate departure.

‘Comfort yourself, though,’ he said to Janet, as he pressed her hand in the hall while the dogcart waited without; ‘I shall be down again in three or four days—a week at farthest. Mind you write me word how the Head was looking, and take care of yourself on the slippery turf at its edge. I wish I could be there to look after my darling.’

And then he was gone, and Janet was left to the solace of a good cry—that feminine panacea for all trouble.

Meanwhile, in moody silence the Captain was being driven to the station. My readers will see that he was unscrupulous, a deceiver, and a consummate hypocrite; but to do him justice, he possessed a conscience and a heart accessible to pity. His better nature was at present diligently asserting itself, and the absolute trustfulness and abnegation of self which Janet had just now exhibited so beautifully was making a deep impression on his resolution. As a mere matter of calculation, he had determined to marry Janet, and the hypocrisy which that entailed merely implied a course of action in which he had long been an adept. Cool, wary, and dispassion-

ate, blessed with an intellect which, turned to better ends, would have rapidly secured him, not only competence, but distinction in any of the higher professions, he had deliberately throughout life chosen dishonourable dealings and worthless associates. He had prosecuted his friendship with John Marshall simply with an eye to self-aggrandisement.

He had urged his suit successfully with Janet, because he knew that she would have money, and had been so gratified by her father's announcement that he would settle 15,000*l.* on her, that he had determined to risk his all on the venture. As for love, or even affection, he had been utterly insensible to such juvenile sentiments throughout his courtship. Now, however, he felt compunction. That bright, innocent, pure girl—the morning of whose life had never been dimmed even by a passing cloud—to bring her to woe, to death as he felt it would be) with a broken heart—to snap every thread of honour, friendship, and hospitality, at the same time that he dragged her down to ruin: this certainly was not an enviable prospect; he could not do this.

Soon, however, the tempter reasserted his dominion: 15,000*l.* was not to be despised, and it was not his custom to stand at trifles when substantial gain presented itself. Nay, could he not visit North America, Canada, even the Rocky Mountains?—people did it nowadays for a wedding-tour—and then he need never return! She need never know the depth of his degradation. In that new world he would begin life afresh, and learn her goodness. Bah! to think of a moment's hesitation, come what would, when 15,000*l.* was in question, was absurd. And so we leave him, as he is whirled swiftly to London. What must be, shall be.

That same afternoon a note from Mrs. Marshall, acquainting Dundas that to-morrow's excursion was put off, was delivered to him as he sat reading in his study. He had some intention of writing a pamphlet on 'criminal responsibility,' and at this time happened to be perusing a recent treatise on psychology in its bearings on insanity. He read the note, and was surprised at the coincidence of a second picnic projected at Langton having to be postponed at the last moment through the sudden departure of the Captain on business. Then he laid it aside, and went on with his book. Presently he came upon a passage which made him close the work, light a cheroot, and stride up and down the room in meditation. It was as follows:

'Amongst the many allied forms may be mentioned *recurrent mania*, from which the ancient idea of madness returning by monthly cycles and the name "lunacy" seems to have proceeded. Modern instances are far from uncommon. In some mysterious manner, which as yet science cannot fathom, the recurrence of the delusions is connected with the lunar phases. On fixed days, at regular in-

tervals, month by month, the sufferer falls under the influence of mania, and is irresistibly drawn towards the object of his delusion. A great desire for locomotion, an intense restlessness, frequently distinguishes such patients.'

'That fellow Gibbs has often a strange light in his eyes,' soliloquised Dundas, as he strode up and down. 'I have frequently thought him rather mad, and put it down to the wonderful story he told us of his adventures in Canada. And here he is with every possible motive to stay at Langton, engaged to a girl a great deal too good for him' (and here he winced), 'with excursions arranged and people asked for them, with all appliances for happiness round him, on two occasions breaking away from all to run up to town. And now I think of it, it is on both occasions on the 5th of the month, on the 5th of two consecutive months, too, that he runs off. Certainly it is on business each time that he goes; but we all know what that means. When a man has any desire for a change, it is always business that he falls back upon. Can this be an instance of recurrent mania? At any rate there is method enough in his procedure to suit my hypothesis of madness;' and then he turned to the book once more: '"On fixed days, at regular intervals, month by month . . . a great desire for locomotion, an intense restlessness, frequently distinguishes such patients."' It is worth thinking about, though it may after all be merely *zufall*, chance, coincidence, or whatever term our ignorance is pleased to use when we are utterly ignorant of a cause.' With these thoughts in his mind he went out, and, meeting his groom, had his attention for the present diverted from the subject.

On the next day he rode over to Langton Rectory. Mr. Stone was in, but somehow or other thought Dundas was not so pleasant as usual. He scouted the notion of Gibbs being a victim to recurrent mania, observing logically enough that two particular instances could not warrant a general conclusion. His own supposition was that the Captain was rather *blasé*, after all, at Langton—'a fellow cannot always do the turtle-dove, eh, Dundas?'

'Quite so; I hate to see a couple eternally cooing,' replied that worthy, who would have given all he possessed for the opportunity to coo with Janet. 'Do you know, Stone, I am convinced that there is a screw loose about the Captain. I don't like the man,' he continued sympathetically.

'For Doctor Fell's reason?' asked the Rector, 'or because he has out-generalled you? You don't mind my saying it, do you?' he added sympathetically.

'I cannot help thinking that there is something suspicious about him. I tried to sound John, but he is so awfully good-natured, you might as well warn the fly of the spider or the moth of the flame.'



'I will candidly tell you that I don't like the man, though I think him just the fellow to fascinate a lady.'

'I mean to watch him well, Stone, for the next month. He sha'n't marry Jan—Miss Marshall, if there is anything amiss. I wrote up to Teesdale, and he has never heard of him. I have half a mind to denounce him as an impostor.'

'You had better not. He will call you out.'

'Will he?' and Harry's eyes gleamed; 'I should like nothing better than a—'

'Sh! you heathen!'

'Well, good-bye.'

'I will walk a mile through the wooded lane with you,' said the Rector, and took up his stick and wide-awake.

They parted after some half-hour's chat. On Stone's return he met Hester Marshall at a place where the path crossed the road at right-angles.

'You have been at the school, Miss Marshall? How are all at home?' And they stayed chatting for a minute.

'I will see you across this first field, if you will let me, Miss Marshall,' at length he said; 'the oxen may mob your dog.'

So they walked over the first and the second, and entered the outlying shrubberies of Langton. All this time the Rector had been making up his mind to ask a momentous question. He was neither shy nor diffident, but perhaps he felt that he did not quite understand the lady's mind. Now was his chance, however, and he spoke.

'Miss Marshall, I am too fond of conversing with you—nay, too pleased if I do but breathe the same atmosphere with you and see you before me, for my peace of heart. Refinements would not give you any pleasure, even if they suited my temper. I cannot swear lovers' oaths, but I have learnt lately that my heart is full of love—of deep, true, faithful love for you. I do not think you are quite indifferent to me: may I ask a bold question, Hester? Do you—can you feel the—in short, Hester, will you take my love and marry me?' And he stopped and looked earnestly at her with eyes that spoke far more eloquently than his words.

'Mr. Stone, why did you ask me? Ask some one more worthy of your love!' and she turned aside to conceal her agitation. 'How little suited am I to join you in all your plans for the welfare of Langton! You do not know how much I esteem you; but as for—for marriage—I am not at all the woman you should marry.'

'Will you leave me to judge that?' he said tenderly.

'It has come upon me so suddenly, Mr. Stone; I never dreamed of your really loving me. You will never know how much I value your love,' she added, stealing a glance of devotion at him; 'but—but I cannot pain you, and yet I must say, no!'

‘ Say no, Hester, because of some perfectional idea you have of what a clergyman’s wife ought to be ? Be mine, and trust me to find out your disqualifications. I do not want some grand heroic Ida, but

‘ A creature not too bright or good  
For human nature’s daily food.’

‘ Let me end this, grieved though I am to do it, Mr. Stone. Forget me, and seek a wife worthy of you. I cannot be your helpmeet—nay,’ she said gaily, as she walked on and left him rooted to the ground, ‘ I cannot even make tea ! God bless you for your noble feelings, Mr. Stone ! I shall think of you always with such pride, but indeed—indeed, my love is poor like this fragile speedwell,’ and she shook its blue petals off by a touch from her parasol ; ‘ yours is like that oak for strength. Farewell : you have at least made me a proud woman, if I cannot be a happy one !’ And before he could stop her she had swiftly passed behind a bush and escaped.

The unfortunate Rector walked slowly back to a dinner he could not eat, chewing the cud of sweet yet bitter thoughts by the way. Hester had refused him, but she evidently loved him. Esteem must surely melt into warmer feelings as the suns rolled on. He would not despair. Was she not tenfold more precious to him than ever ? Though she had sacrificed her vision of happiness on the altar of an idea, he was the last man to discourage such magnanimity. He loved her himself devotedly, distractedly ; he might well afford to wait till time had dissipated her fanciful dreams of perfection, and she awoke to the claims of a less ideal, but a warmer human love. Yes, he would wait ; though the present was drear and hopeless, such love as he felt could not be given to mortal in vain. It must find its true end, and that was happiness with Hester.

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## TURKEY AS A FIELD FOR EMIGRATION

BY J. LEWIS FARLEY, AUTHOR OF 'MODERN TURKEY,' ETC.

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CONSIDERABLE attention has been lately directed to the question of emigration ; but, amongst the several fields considered as suitable, few persons appear to think of Turkey. Yet that country offers many advantages which are possessed neither by Canada, America, nor Australia. By many, Turkey is still looked upon as benighted and barbarous, while, on the contrary, there are few, if any, countries in which life and property are more secure. Most persons, in fact, allowing their imaginations to carry them back to the days when the haughty and bigoted Turk looked down upon the Giaour as the abject slave who should minister to his pleasures and his wants, forget the various changes which have occurred since, by one severe and effectual blow, Sultan Mahmoud destroyed for ever the leaders of Moslem fanaticism. With the destruction of the Janizaries (June 15th, 1826) fell that military despotism under which both prince and people groaned, and the sultan was then, for the first time, enabled to undertake those salutary reforms which the exigences of an advancing civilisation required. Since that day, Turkish statesmen have become amenable to foreign counsel ; the ancient bigotry has disappeared, and been replaced by a religious tolerance which is certainly not surpassed, if even equalled, in any country in Europe ; whilst the old jealousy towards the Frank has been succeeded by a cordial friendship, and by the most unbounded hospitality. In Turkey, and in Turkey alone, hospitality appears under a grand and noble aspect. It is not only a momentary shelter from the storm, but it is a hospitality which, rising from the dignity of mere benevolence to that of a political reception, embraces the future as well as the present. As soon as the stranger places his foot on Turkish soil, he is saluted by the name of *mussafir* (guest). Hospitality, with its handmaids civil and religious liberty, is secured to him ; his own laws are administered by functionaries of his own nation ; while by the State the Moslem is only recognised in his mosque, the Christian in his church, and the Jew in his synagogue.

This civil and religious, as well as the commercial, liberty granted to the stranger renders Turkey not only a favourable field for capital and enterprise, but also an eligible home for the superabundant

population of Western Europe, who are daily seeking in distant lands the comforts and independence denied them in their own. In fact, the 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' are, at the present moment, one of the desiderata of Turkey, the paucity of hands being a serious obstacle to the development of the great natural resources of the empire. In most civilised countries there appears to be an irresistible attraction which draws men of energy and intelligence from the rural districts into populous towns, and makes them prefer the active bustle of city life to the peaceful tenor of a pastoral existence. In Turkey, from the operation of various causes, the principal cities, such as Constantinople, Smyrna, Salonica, Trebizond, and Beyrout, are filled with a busy crowd unceasingly engaged in the pursuits of commerce, while agriculture languishes from the want of hands necessary to till the soil. In Macedonia, for example, which possesses a delightful climate, only one-fourth part of the land is under cultivation, and even that does not yield one-third of what it is capable. Cyprus, which, in the time of the Venetians, possessed a population of 1,000,000, now contains only 180,000. The pashalic of Damascus, which extends, north to south, from Hamah on the Orontes down to the deserts of Arabia Petraea south-east of the Dead Sea—a length of about four degrees of latitude—is extremely fertile, and capable of supporting a population of 6,000,000 souls, whereas, at present, the population is not more than 500,000. This state of the rural districts is apparent all over the empire, and may, to a great extent, be traced to the baneful system of farming the taxes, which prevailed from the reign of Mohammed II. to that of the late Sultan Abdul-Medjid. Formerly, the taxes of a province were usually farmed by the pasha or governor for the time being, who, knowing that his tenure of power was most uncertain, invariably governed the pashalic for his own personal advantage, ignoring altogether the interests both of the people and the state. It is related by Volney that the merchants of Aleppo, dissatisfied with the numerous inconveniences of Alexandretta, wished to abandon that port, and carry the trade to Latakia. They proposed to the pasha of Tripoli to repair the harbour of Latakia at their own expense, provided he would grant them an exemption from all duties during the space of ten years. To induce him to comply with this request, the merchants talked much of the advantages which would in time result to the whole neighbouring country; but 'what signifies it to me that which may happen in time?' replied the pasha: 'I was yesterday at Marash; to-morrow, perhaps, I shall be at Djeddah. Why should I deprive myself of present advantages which are certain for future benefits I cannot hope to partake of?' Under such a system as this, the unfortunate peasant was impoverished, the last para extracted from him, and the depopulation of the country was the inevitable result.

Sultan Mahmoud II. (the present sultan's father) endeavoured to remedy these evils ; and the late Sultan Abdul-Medjid, by the Hatti-Shérif of Gul-Hané (November 3d, 1839), fearlessly denounced the existing abuses, and declared his determination to reform altogether the mode of collecting the revenue. Since that time, no government official has been permitted to farm the taxes ; the condition of the peasant has improved, the pashas no longer possess unlimited power, while every man is guaranteed the fruit of his labour, and can do as he pleases with his own. It is true, there is much still to be desired in the collection of the revenue ; but, with all its attendant disadvantages to the agriculturist, Turkey offers, nevertheless, much more favourable conditions to the immigrant than he can find in most other countries. Asia Minor and Syria are comparatively close to our own shores ; they possess a fertile soil, a delightful climate, a hospitable population, and are capable of producing in abundance everything necessary for the wants of man.

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O. O. Миллер, del.

DORETTA.

## D O R E T T A

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To a maiden, as she slept,  
Through a vision music crept,  
For a voice belovèd rang,  
Sweet as if a seraph sang.

‘ Dimly gleams the shifting vane  
In the amber light,  
And the gusty drops of rain  
Splinter on the lattice-pane ;  
It is morn, Doretta.

With the dawn the poplar row  
Whitens in the wind ;  
Soon the driving clouds will glow,  
And the sopping roses blow,  
Red at heart, Doretta.

Through the meadow all the night  
Slid the quiet brook ;  
Lo, it ripples into light,  
And the grass with daisies white  
Brims anew, Doretta.

Red and stormy is the morn,  
Fierce the raging east ;  
But with ragged plume and torn,  
See the bird of love is borne—  
Borne to thee, Doretta.’

So the voice belovèd spoke,  
And the maiden straight awoke,  
And the day was dawning fair,  
And the bird of love was there.

WILLIAM SAWYER.

## A VISIT TO THE SCHULTZE GUNPOWDER MANUFACTORY

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‘HAIL, smiling morn!’ It is the first of September.

‘Full of th’ expected sport, my heart beats high,  
And, with impatient step, I haste to reach  
The stubbles, where the scatter’d ears afford  
A sweet repast to the yet heedless game.  
How my brave dogs o’er the broad furrows bound,  
Quart’ring their ground exactly! Ah, that point  
Answers my eager hope, and fills my breast  
With joy unspeakable. How close they lie!  
Whilst to the spot, with steady pace, I tend:  
Now from the ground, with noisy wing they burst,  
And dart away. My victim singled out,  
In his aerial course falls short, nor skims  
Th’ adjoining edge, *o’er which the rest unhurt*  
Have pass’d.’

This is very often the case; one bird falls to the right barrel, and ‘the rest unhurt’ go on their way, rejoicing no doubt at having escaped a deadly volley from the left barrel. There is, however, a reason for their having got off scot-free, well known to all sportsmen; *i. e.* the smoke from the first barrel obscured the birds from the sportsman’s second aim, until they were out of range. Science, however, has discovered a panacea for this oft-recurring disappointment, in Schultze’s Wood Powder, a smokeless explosive which we wish to introduce to those of our readers who are not already conversant with its merits. Of course every one knows our ‘dear, dirty old friend,’ Black Gunpowder; the acquaintance of which we made in early youth, turning it into a ‘devil’ to frighten our grandmother; fighting our country’s battles with it in the hot season of youth and courage; and anon, having turned our sword into a ploughshare, and incidentally produced ‘stubbles,’ we sally forth armed with a ‘Tolley’ breechloader; *but* we have cut our ‘dear, dirty old friend,’ and our gun is loaded with Schultze’s Wood Powder instead. How is this? you inquire. Why abandon an explosive with which Colonel Hawker, and the never-to-be-forgotten Maxwell of *Wild Sports of the West* celebrity, killed so many head of game? To this we reply, Schultze’s Wood Powder was not invented in *their* day, or they *would* have used it, and for these reasons.

For seven hundred years and more, even granting the invention to have been Roger Bacon’s, the dull black mixture of sulphur,

re, and charcoal—it is only a mixture, not a chemical compound has had the monopoly of guns, large and small. It has answered every purpose moderately well, perhaps more than moderately. Nevertheless, from time to time the desire has arisen to evolve out of chemical stores some new compound, mechanical or chemical, that should do better duty. Somewhat extraordinary, indeed, that it seems that, amidst all the improvements of guns and gunnery, the advancement of chemistry and mechanism, the gaseous motor for gun projectiles should be composed as at first. The explanation is not difficult. Gunpowder occupies a sort of half-way ground between things innocent and things dangerous; a medium quality serving its many applications. Exploding readily enough for all convenient needs, it never *spontaneously* explodes—a great point in its favour. Then, its power of water-absorption not being very great, it stores tolerably well. But, more than anything else, gunpowder has held its long and almost exclusive sway over guns and gunnery owing to the two following circumstances: it can be made of any desired percentage composition, and it may be corned or grained to any degree of coarseness or fineness. As employed for different purposes, it is necessary that gunpowder should have various strengths. To a considerable extent the strength of gunpowder, by varying the relative amount of its components, can be modified; but the great adjustive resource consists in increasing or diminishing the dimension of its grains.

Having taken account of certain special good qualities of gunpowder, we now come to certain of its bad qualities. Safe it indeed is in the sense of not igniting spontaneously; but it deteriorates by ageing, the more especially if in a moist atmosphere. If gunpowder is thoroughly wetted, then may it be considered wholly spoilt. In burning, gunpowder evolves much heat, much smoke; it also deposits much foulness. On the debtor side of gunpowder must be reckoned, also, the danger attendant on manufacture. It would be a great advantage if possible to devise a gunpowder that should acquire its really-dangerous qualities with the very last manufacturing touch, whereby in every incipient stage it might be stored without possibility of risk.

It will have been gathered, then, that gunpowder, ordinary or black gunpowder, though it has seen some service and done some good-duty in its time, is not so perfect as to fulfil all requisitions required; wherefore from time to time experiments have been directed to the manufacture of a substitute.

The only substitute yet invented which has met with favourable notice from practical sportsmen is Schultze's Wood Powder—gunpowder is all but universally condemned on account of its liability to *spontaneous* combustion—which, from its being granulated, and consequently permeated by air, can never generate fire of itself.



This explosive, invented by Captain Schultze, a Prussian officer, was originally manufactured at Potsdam, near Berlin, and the factory catching fire in 1868, instead of *exploding*—ruining the neighbourhood, and leaving many widows and orphans, like the recent gun-cotton explosion at Stowmarket—*burned quietly to the ground*. A company of English gentlemen, fond of field sports, foreseeing the advantages to be derived from its introduction into England, purchased a site for its production in the New Forest, and thither we must carry our readers on 'a visit to the Schultze Gunpowder manufactory.' Having been obliged to pay 'toll'—in these enlightened days of 'strikes' why do not the public refuse such an *imposition*?—we cross Waterloo-bridge, and entering the station of that name, are 'whirled' by train to Redbridge, which, as every one ought to know, is not very far from Southampton; there, taking a vehicle yclept a 'trap,' we are driven through miles of silvan scenery; solitudes, where the moorcock still crows defiantly at his rival, and 'rules the roost;' where the timid deer browse amidst glades; where the fox prowls in search of the wild rabbits' 'stop;' and where all would be still and quiet, were it not for the eminently practical spirit of the office of the 'Woods and Forests,' who, for the modest douceur of 'twenty guineas per annum,' permit—as our Jehu informs us—'any one as can rise the dibs to kill an' worry everythink he likes, little an' big, for the best part of the year.' Indeed, from what we gathered, it seems that anybody who *can* 'rise the dibs' to purchase the 'range' is really entitled to commit wholesale slaughter amongst the timid denizens of this last retreat of the Fauna of England. Consequently, many retired 'slop-shop' and 'marine-store dealers,' apeing their betters, pay their twenty guineas; but, as our Jehu says, 'takes care they has their wally—*Anglicè*, value—'for it.' And what a tale he does unfold, to be sure!—'Little 'ares, with ther eyes a-jist open, 'as ther brains blowed out; an' small birds, jist able to fly, is tuk whum an' made into soup.' Cruelty, we think, is just as much associated with this forest nowadays as it was in the old time before us, when Giraldus Cambrensis wrote: 'In these days our nobility esteem the sports of hunting and hawking as the most honourable employments, the most exalted virtues; and to be continually engaged in these amusements is, in their opinion, the sum of human happiness. By being constantly engaged in savage sport they contract habits of barbarity; lose, in a great measure, their feelings and humanity, and become nearly as ferocious as the beasts they pursue; the husbandman is driven with his innocent flocks and herds from his fertile fields and pastures, that beasts may roam in his stead.' Since, therefore, the only reason that this vast tract is not turned into arable land is, that the office of the 'Woods and Forests' let it out for tiny leverets and half-fledged birds to be murdered by revolu-

onary and sanguinary 'slop-shop' and 'marine-store dealers,' all we can say is, 'Away with it, away with it! We'll have none of it!' But here we are; snugly ensconced in a dell lies the object of our visit, and we plunge at once *in medias res*.

Here and there, at intervals wide apart, are various buildings of light structure, from one of which rises a tall chimney, instrumental in raising steam to drive a 10-horse-power sawing-machine, which rapidly creates the 'wood powder' to be turned into use for the gun by the following process:

The grains, being collected in a mass, are subjected to a treatment of chemical washing, whereby calcareous and various other impurities are separated, leaving hardly anything behind save pure woody matter, cellulose or lignine. The next operation has for its end the conversion of these cellulose grains into a sort of incipient xyloidine, or gun-cotton material, by digestion with a mixture of sulphuric and nitric acids. Practically it is found that absolutely affected xyloidine (of which ordinary gun-cotton is the purest type) not only decomposes spontaneously by time, the chief products of combustion being gum and oxalic acid, but it is moreover liable to combustion of a sort that may be practically called spontaneous, so slight and so uncontrollable are the causes sufficing to bring it about. Cellulose or woody matter, otherwise termed lignine, partially converted to xyloidine is, the inventor affirms, subject to neither of those contingencies. Our readers will understand that, inasmuch as the wood used as a constituent of the Schultze gunpowder is not charred, its original hydrogen is left, and by and by, at the time of firing, will be necessarily utilised towards the gaseous propulsive resultant. Next, washed with carbonate-of-soda solution and dried, an important circumstance is now recognisable.

The grains, brought to the condition just described, are stored away in bulk, not necessarily to be endowed with final explosive energy until the time of package, transport, and consignment. Only one treatment has to be carried out, and it is very simple. The gaseous grains have to be charged with a certain definite percentage of some nitrate, which is done by steeping them in the nitrate solution and drying. Ordinarily a solution of nitrate of potash (common saltpetre) is employed; but in elaborating certain varieties of white powder, nitrate of baryta is preferred.

Having traced the new powder to its final stage, we may contemplate it under the light of two distinct scrutinies—theoretical and practical. Review of the chemical agencies involved, or that may be evolved, suggests the reaction, especially under prolonged moisture, of the sulphur and nitre of ordinary powder, whereby sulphide of potassium should result. Practice is confirmatory: under the condition indicated sulphide of potassium, more or less, does result, and proportionate to the extent of decomposition is the powder

deteriorated. Inasmuch as the Schultze gunpowder is wholly devoid of sulphur, so is the particular decomposition adverted to impossible; and theory, at least, fails to suggest any other decomposition as probable or even possible.

All the buildings requisite for manufacturing this explosive are cheap and flimsy, so that if it did catch fire no loss would ensue. The 'plant of machinery' is of small cost in comparison with that used for making black gunpowder, and Schultze's wood powder is sold at a price commensurate with its cheap production. An explosive is often 'better known than liked,' such as gun-cotton; but Schultze's wood powder requires only 'to be known; to be liked,' as a trial of it, lately made for the satisfaction of its readers by the conductors of the *Land and Water* journal, recently showed. Indeed, it was proved to give more penetration than gunpowder, and it costs less. There is also no smoke, and consequently the second barrel can always be used at once, instead of waiting for the smoke to clear away, as when using black powder.

Having thanked our friend, at whose invitation we had been afforded the pleasure of witnessing this interesting process of manufacture, we again took trap for Redbridge, were again whirled to Waterloo Station, and again paid 'toll' for crossing the bridge for the second time in a day. What a burden such a 'toll' is on the lower classes, whose daily occupation takes them to and fro across the bridges, we can readily understand.

CADWALLADER WARDY.

## AMERICAN NOVELISTS

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### I. JAMES FENIMORE COOPER.

When a *Cyclopædia of American Literature* was first formed, the volumes of which it was composed were respectively embellished with engraved portraits of Franklin and Cooper; the former as the representative of the epoch when the colony was on the way towards development into the nation, the latter as the pioneer of literature wholly national. And, while calling attention to this fact, one of the American critical journals recognises Cooper as 'the first American author, in the full significance of the term.' Rough and unsophisticated in style, a very 'navvy' of literature, the place he holds is much better expressed by the term 'pioneer' than by any phrase suggestive of literary completeness.

Choosing his characters from among the rough sons of the soil, Cooper was, however, enabled specially to deserve an appellation distinctly American. A French writer remarks that the only portraits of the American people who exhibit any marked national character are the backwoodsmen of the West; and American writers are allowed that, beyond such rough-hewn originals, and passing on to the majority of the labouring population who are marked with similar traits to a higher level of society, the American national character is invisible. This opinion was given nearly twenty years ago, and is gradually becoming less true to facts. At the time when Cooper began his career, there was doubtless much to be said on this side. Choosing as he did those lower strata of society and unrefined originals of the forest for subject-matter, he was enabled to avoid the delineations of the polished and colourless upper classes, and so to inaugurate a literature bearing some impress, however incomplete, of nationality.

The critics of his own country hold extremely divergent views concerning him, some expressing the highest admiration for his untutored genius, which could pass without effort from English fashionable life, in which he laid the scene of his first volume, to the adventures of a pirate captain, and from the romantic life of the woods to the deerslayer's haunts in the heart of the forest. On the other hand, we find writers expressing contempt for his want of refinement, extravagance, crudity, and want of art in the arrangement of his plots, alleging also that the only characters he can paint are of the rough adventurer type, and that two only of these are originals, appearing again and again in various disguises. It is also



urged against him, that he is unable to enter into delicate moods of feeling, and that he fails most lamentably in the depiction of women.

There have been the same differences of opinion expressed as to his character, some giving him praise as a manly and upright spirit with a sturdy self-reliance and candour, others alleging that his later volumes were but records of personal quarrels and frivolous disputes with his neighbours. With respect to his book *Ways of the Hour*, he suffered the same abusive criticism as did Dickens for his American creations. This volume and Dickens's works on American society are classed together as 'coarse and spiteful caricatures,' 'bitter and resentful,' 'prosy and diffuse,' &c. Since this time (twenty years ago) brother Jonathan has learnt much of the principles of give and take, and though, like ourselves, a little touchy at times, would yet laugh at such shafts to-day, and send them flying back with interest.

The fact is that Cooper, when completely established as a novelist, began to write with a purpose foreign to legitimate romance. He attempted to make his volumes vehicles of social reform, and that not in any extended scale large enough to command the sympathies of the world, but by choosing for illustration some petty abuse in American administration, and bending all his characters to the evolution of this sole idea. At one time a disputed question with regard to rent would occupy his pen; at another he would devote his attention to such matters as the insufficiency of trial by jury, in cases where public opinion running in a vehement current has already tried the question and passed sentence.

Such questions as these are but of local and may be of only temporary interest. Of importance sufficient to deserve the fullest attention at a given time, they are yet fatal to an enduring literary reputation. If it is intended that a romance shall live, its subjects must possess sufficient of the breadth and amplitude of human nature to insure vitality. Puppets set up merely in elucidation of a detail, not of extended life, but of temporary social difficulties, cannot be expected to survive the solution or removal of those difficulties, unless indeed their creator be of the very highest genius, and subtly intertwine his special subject with larger and more general ones. Our own Charles Reade has wrought in the same direction as Cooper; he has endeavoured to reform abuses by the mighty power of the novel, and has done some good work in this way. He has injured, although far from ruined, his literary reputation by so doing; and he owns a faculty, which few indeed possess, of giving to dry bones the vigour and semblance of life, of investing a blue-book with human garments, depositing all his selected details, with such art as to seem to do it quite casually, within his puppets' pockets, and letting the blue back of the tedious volume blend somehow into the colour of some splendid woman's eyes.



Cooper was without this marvellous literary and artistic faculty. regards vigour and earnestness, he is the equal of Charles Reade; it is doubtless that very abundance of vitality which has driven him both into a kind of useful literature which should seem to them to be real work, and not mere amusement for an idle hour.

Not possessing the power of hiding the hard angles of his purposes in a glamour of romance, Cooper, by becoming a social reformer, lost his power as a novelist, and so committed, as his countrymen say, 'literary suicide.' Besides this, his satires were blunt and offensive; and having an antipathy, which he failed not to express, for New-England people, as well as some political prejudices, made many enemies.

We must bestow some consideration upon his earlier works, and the circumstances which attended their composition, before the so-called suicide.

At the time of the appearance of Cooper's first novel *Precaution*, American literature had, indeed, put forth but little fruit. Irving had not become popular with his *Sketch-book*; but Prescott was still a student, Emerson a junior in college, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Holmes, Whittier, and Poe, we learn from the chief American monthly, were schoolboys; Mrs. Stowe was a schoolgirl (would that she had remained at school a little longer!); Lowell was in the nursery, and Motley scarce out of it.

In 1820, when Cooper was about thirty years of age, he was leading a quiet rural life on a small farm in Scarsdale, some five-and-twenty miles from New York. In youth he had been a midshipman, but had married early and retired from the navy. Here he was living comfortably, with no thought of a literary career. Landscape gardening was a favourite pursuit, and in harmony with the tranquillity of his life. An occasional parcel of books would arrive from England, causing some excitement to learn what was proceeding from the pens of Edgeworth, Wilberforce, or More. Pope, Thomson, and Gray were always at hand and appreciated. Shakespeare was read in the evenings, as also was Milton, but he for only a page or two at a time; for Milton was too heavy for Cooper's taste, who would have chosen Shakespeare to write *Paradise Lost*. Scott, Byron, Burns, and Wordsworth were the particular stars in the literary heaven, and the thought of coming out on the same day with such as these seems to have inspired Americans with reverential diffidence. One day in the box of books came a volume, which Cooper read, and then vigorously denounced as trash, adding, 'I can write you a better book than that myself.'

Before this time he may be said to have done nothing appreciable in literature, nor to have had any real ambition in that direction. When about eleven years of age, the reading of some absurd romance had stimulated him and a boy friend to the composition

of a story in imitation of it. This was never written down, but was dictated, but to the extent only of a few chapters, by Cooper to his friend, whose father had a small printing-office; as it was composed, the fragment was put direct into type. A little later in life also a strolling beggar having asked for alms, and suggested that if he could but lay hands on a stirring ballad suitable to sing about the villages, he would reap a plentiful harvest, Cooper wrote for him some doggerel based on a local incident, and entitled 'Buffalo Burnt; or the dreadful Conflagration.'

Such Homeric debut he did not, however, follow up, though the forgotten ballad was brought unintentionally to his notice several years afterwards, when a young lady being called upon to sing, much to Cooper's amazement and horror, revived the street-mongers' strains of 'Buffalo Burnt.' Cooper, not being known as the author, happily escaped unpleasant notice.

The suggestion afforded him by the trashy book from England, and the stimulus which his friends brought to bear upon him on hearing his remark, produced more serious fruit. A romance was begun, but of a merely imitative nature, and bearing upon English fashionable life. Once published, however, it produced some little excitement, people being engaged in speculations upon the author, and refusing to believe that the work was not the production of an English lady, or could be the offspring of an American naval officer.

*Precaution*, the romance in question, is by no means a great work; it is poor and weak. Its moralities are commonplace and threadbare, and its sentences ponderous and prosy. It may be summed up critically in a favourite word of the present day—it is 'slow.' Still, it was reprinted in England.

A conversation which Cooper had with an old gentleman, a retired Governor, upon facts connected with the history of the Revolution, was the suggestion which bore for fruit the next volume, the *Spy*. The principal character in this volume is—like many of Cooper's—not wholly an imaginary one, although much distorted from reality by being contemplated, as was Cooper's manner often, from a sentimental point of view. The work is based upon the life of an individual, who had performed wonderful feats of reckless daring and self-sacrifice in the war; and is a considerable improvement upon its predecessor.

The *Spy* met with some favour in England as a novelty. It was soon also translated into French, and amusing stories are told with respect to the translator's inability to comprehend Americanisms. One in particular, which is to be found in the 'Cooper Gallery,' is worth relating. 'The name given to the Wharton place, "the Locusts," proved a puzzle; the word was rendered as it was found in the dictionary, "les Sauterelles"—"the Grasshoppers." This might have answered very well, but for one unfortunate fact: a

dragoon of Lawson's troop is represented as tying his horse to one of the locusts on the lawn. Here was a difficulty ! The worthy translator, however, belonging evidently to the class *traduttori, traditori*, seems to have taken it for granted that Transatlantic grasshoppers must necessarily be of gigantic proportions. Nothing daunted, he proceeds gravely to state the remarkable fact, that the dragoon secured his charger by fastening the bridle to one of the grasshoppers before the door, apparently standing there for that purpose.'

The structure of Cooper's plots, and his improbable interweaving of incidents, have been often animadverted upon. If we trace the manner of composition of one of his earliest volumes—the *Spy*—we shall not wonder at this, but only that the books should manifest any coherence at all. The first volume was written and printed months before a single line of the second was put on paper. Then while the second was in progress, going into the hands of the compositor immediately after leaving those of the author, the publisher took alarm. He began to be afraid that the work might grow to such a length as to consume his profits in paper and type. What was to be done ? Cooper's genius was equal to the emergency. He immediately wrote a concluding chapter for the volume, which was actually printed and paged several weeks before the chapters destined to precede it were constructed or imagined.

We meet occasionally with a humorous incident, though wild and improbable adventures form the staple of the volumes. In the *Spy*, for instance, we have an amusing picture of an old housekeeper and a black servant, who are in concert, endeavouring to discover the will of their old master, who is dying. When they meet with a family Bible containing entries of his children's birth, they are deluded by the impression that they have found the object of their search, and mistake the recorded names for a list of legatees.

When Sir Walter Scott's *Pirate* arrived in America, there were many speculations afloat as to whether such a work could have been the composition of the author of *Waverley*, and many marvelled how a man of Scott's habits of life could have possibly come at the nautical detail. Cooper, as an old habitué of the sea, was dissatisfied with the book ; and the result of this feeling was, that he determined to write a story himself, which should be more accurate in its pictures of life afloat. The *Pilot* is due to the impulse thus awakened, being the second work of Cooper's whose production is owing to a feeling of emulation.

The next work, the *Pioneers*, brings before us one of Cooper's most original conceptions, the Puritanical old backwoodsman, Leather-stocking. These volumes may be crude and harsh and improbable, without style or delicacy of expression, and with impossible plots ; but take them scene by scene, and we get at the reason of their extensive popularity. The characters may be rough, but they

are life-like. The pictures are vividly painted; the conversations of the persons who come upon the scene might be overheard direct from the forest or the homestead, they are so natural and real in detail. Where the wood-chopper mocks old Leather-stocking as 'you old dried cornstalk, you sapless stub!' and then fires at a pigeon with his fowling-piece and misses it, and the old man calmly raises his rifle and brings down the bird with the single ball, the details are worked out with such minuteness and freshness, that we are brought completely home to the vigour of life and the rude feeling of the forest.

At the time of writing *Lionel Lincoln*, Cooper had formed a plan of a series of romances, drawn from early legends or historical records, the scene of each story to be laid in one of the thirteen different colonies which constituted the Union. *Lionel Lincoln*, in accordance with this view, was to have been styled *A Legend of the Thirteen Republics*, but this inscription was erased before the publication of the work. Here we see Cooper beginning to develop literary schemes. Formerly, each work had been looked upon as a final one—he would write a novel, because he had read some trash and thought he could do better himself; he would write another, because he was dissatisfied with Scott's descriptions of maritime adventure; and so on. Now, however, he begins to look upon himself for the first time as a man of letters.

His departure for Europe soon after this time prevented his carrying this scheme into practice, and the idea of collecting literary material from the several States was abandoned. The historical fact upon which *Lionel Lincoln* is founded is the battle of Bunker's Hill. In giving such a picture as this, we see Cooper at his best; his rough vigour here stands him in good stead, and his forte being in the depiction of exciting incidents rather than in the tranquil study of human nature, he is most surely in his element in such a scene.

The *Last of the Mohicans* is probably the best known here of Cooper's works; and we find that its success was greater than that of any previous production. A curious story is told with regard to the composition of a portion of this romance: soon after the book was begun, Cooper, being exposed one sultry day to the intense heat of the autumn sun, which had a year or two before produced in him a severe attack of fever, something resembling the effects of a sun-stroke, was again seized with a similar malady. 'During the height of the attack, his mind was filled with images connected with the book recently begun. One afternoon, suddenly rousing himself, he called for pen and paper; but, too ill to use them himself, he requested Mrs. Cooper, watching anxiously at his side, to write to his dictation. Most reluctantly, and in fear of delirium, the request was complied with, and solely with a view of relieving his mind from



temporary excitement. A page of notes was rapidly dictated and written out; to his alarmed nurse they appeared the wild incoherent fancies of delirium, with which the names of Natty, Chingachgook, and Cora, already familiar to her, were blended. But in truth there was no delirium; a clear and vivid picture of the struggle between Magna and Chingachgook filled his mind at the moment, and only a few weeks later the chapter—the twelfth of the book—was actually written from that rude sketch.' Several of Cooper's characters are carried on through more than one work. With the old hunter, Natty Bumppo, we first meet in the *Pioneers*; and after introducing him again to us in the *Last of the Mohicans*, Cooper deliberates, at the outset of a new work, whether or not he can bring forward the same character for a third time, but with a train of novel incidents about him. His affection for this creation of his fancy was however so great, that with the first pages of the *Prairie* we find Natty appearing, in a somewhat melodramatic manner, against the gilded background of a sky at sunset. After this, Cooper had fewer compunctions, and Natty appears again and again in several stages of his imaginary life. The curious part of it is, that the usual order of things is reversed; and the Leather-stocking of the *Pioneers*, the Hawkeye of the *Mohicans*, the aged trapper of the *Prairie*, appears in the later novel, the *Pathfinder*, as a lover, and afterwards again in the *Deerslayer* as a youth.

American novelists of this period seem to have had a singular knack of falling in with Sir Walter Scott. Cooper and he met in Paris, where the latter was collecting materials for his *Life of Napoleon*. They managed to introduce each other on the stairs of an hotel where Scott had called for the purpose of finding Cooper. During the first few minutes of their interview, all Scott's remarks were in French and all Cooper's in English, until the former recollected himself and laughingly said, that the Frenchmen had got his tongue so set to their lingo, that he had half forgotten his own.

Cooper stayed in Paris for some time in the summer of 1827, living in a pretty country house on the banks of the Seine. With regard to his manner of life here, a remark which occurs in one of his letters is worth repeating: 'One of our great amusements is to watch the *living* life on the river; there is no *still* life in Paris.' It was while residing here that Cooper completed the *Red Rover*, which is a narrative of somewhat wild adventures on the sea.

It is not often that we can give an author's own opinion upon his writings, as in the case of Cooper. He had lost a considerable portion of his fortune, and had made over his copyright to his publishers. Having been engaged by them to revise the volumes for the press, he returned the last of the set with these remarks: 'Well, gentlemen, I have read over again all my books, a task which your liberality alone could have induced me to undertake; and I do not



## MICHAELMAS

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THE brown leaves rustle in the wind,  
And golden is the oak-tree's crown ;  
The red beech drops her ripen'd mast,  
And chestnut husks come showering down.

September's kiss is on the woods,  
And garner'd is Pomona's wealth ;  
The squirrel thinks of winter rest,  
Begins to store his nuts by stealth.

Gone are the roses, crimson flowers  
That crown'd the virgin brow of June ;  
And where the nightingale hath sung,  
The robin pipes his mellow tune.

One touch of frost is on the blades  
Of grass beneath the forest-tree ;  
Close in his lair the dormouse lies,  
And nestled in her cell the bee.

The last geraniums still shed  
On manor-lawn a scarlet glow ;  
The queen chrysanthemum hath donn'd  
Her robes of winter—rose and snow.

The latest breath of summer stirs  
Upon the leaves and in the air ;  
It shakes the cones amid the firs,  
And straight is gone we know not where.

So oft a gleam of sunshine past  
Re-shines again in man's last days ;  
Summer and winter, smiles and tears—  
Wiser than ours, are Heaven's ways.

ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.

# THREE TO ONE

Or some Passages out of the Life of Amicia Lady Sweetapple

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'ANNALS OF AN EVENTFUL LIFE'

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## CHAPTER LXIV. WHY HARRY FORTESCUE WENT TO TOWN.

THE telegram which Mr. Beeswing put into Harry's hand was from Mrs. Nicholson. It was short, and ran thus :

' Mary Nicholson, No. — Lupus-street,

Mr. Fortescue, Heath Lodge, Ascot.

' Mrs. Price died last night. Miss Edith will be up this evening. Please come to town.'

That was all, but it was more than enough. Harry Fortescue felt that he must fly back to help Edith, though she had rejected him only a few days before.

' Come what will,' he said, ' I must go back to arrange about the funeral. What can the poor girl do by herself, and without a friend in the world ?'

He ran to the station, therefore, without waiting for his portman-van, and luckily caught a train in the very act of starting. Just about the time that the ladies were discussing his sudden departure, he was on his way to town in one of the special race trains.

You will wonder, perhaps, how it was that Mrs. Nicholson discovered where Harry Fortescue was, but that is easily explained. He had been so annoyed by the trouble that Edith had to find his address on a former occasion, that he made Mrs. Boffin a speech before he went to Ascot—such a speech, that worthy woman said, as she had never heard from any of her gentlemen—and told her, if any one came to ask his address, to let them have it without any fuss. When, therefore, Mrs. Nicholson called on Mrs. Boffin, she obtained the desired intelligence at once, and she obtained it all the more readily as no one could have called Mrs. Nicholson ' a young person,' as Mrs. Boffin had characterised Edith Price.

So far, in fact, was Mrs. Boffin from giving herself any airs on the occasion, that Mrs. Nicholson's heart warmed towards her, and she said as she left,

'You had better, Mrs. Boffin, be getting Mr. Fortescue's bed ready for him. He'll be back to-night, or my name is not Nicholson.'

'O, la!' said Mrs. Boffin; 'you never mean to say so.' And downstairs she ran, to stir up her slave, the maid-of-all-work.

Harry Fortescue went first to Mrs. Boffin, to tell her that he was come back, and very surprised he was to find that she knew all about it already; then he went to Mrs. Nicholson's, and saw that worthy woman.

'O, Mr. Fortescue,' she said, 'I knew you would come, and I said so to Miss Mary and my Betsy. "Mr. Fortescue is sure to come," I said; and here you are.'

'How is Miss Mary?' asked Harry.

'Poor thing, she be quite beaten down, and lies in her bed. Poor Mrs. Price never held up her head after Miss Edith went; but the doctor never thought the end would be so sudden.'

'That's what they always say,' said Harry bitterly. 'They let people slip through their fingers, and then they say they die suddenly.'

'O, pray don't scold our doctor,' said Mrs. Nicholson; 'he is such a good tender-hearted man.'

'Have you seen about the funeral?' said Harry.

'No, sir,' said Mrs. Nicholson; 'leastways I have spoken to Mr. Nail, but I have done nothing; I waited for your orders.'

'You must go to Mr. Nail at once,' said Harry, 'and have it all arranged before Miss Edith comes.'

'Very good, sir,' said Mrs. Nicholson; 'and what shall I say to Miss Mary?'

'Tell her that I have come to help her and Miss Edith,' said Harry. 'Mind and say something kind to the poor thing.'

'And when Miss Edith comes,' said Mrs. Nicholson, 'what shall I say to her?'

'Tell her the same as I said to Miss Mary,' said Harry, 'and also that I hope to be allowed to see her to-morrow.'

And with these words Harry Fortescue turned and left the door.

'There he goes, a good Samaritan as ever lived,' said Mrs. Nicholson, looking after him in great admiration. 'That's what I call a gentleman. There he is, down at the races, full of pleasure and company, and as soon as ever he hears this poor lady is dead and her daughters in trouble, he puts himself into the train to come and help them.'

So Mrs. Nicholson shut the door and went down to Betsy, telling her she must go out to tell Mr. Nail to come directly.

'There he goes, the bloated arystycrat,' said Mr. Leek to his wife. 'He can't stay away, no, not for a day. Yesterday morning he was 'ere, and 'ere he is again to-day, loafing about the 'ouse where that young lady lived.' Then he added solemnly, 'What

'this country wants, Mrs. Leek, is 'eads; the 'eads of them wicked tyrants as lives for their hown pleasures and trample down the people. There'll never be any peace in England till the 'eads of them arysty-crata roll in the kennel.'

'Quite my sentymint, only more 'appily expressed,' said Mrs. Leek. 'But come in, Leek, come in and 'ave a cup of tea.'

After this ebullition of radical feeling, which would fairly have entitled him to the honour of being a Paris incendiary, Mr. Leek, who would have fainted at the sight of blood, retired into his back shop, and 'ad his cup of tea.'

As for Harry Fortescue, the unconscious object of so much admiration and obloquy, he walked across the Park to the club, feeling neither like Nero nor the Admirable Crichton, nearly choked himself over a solitary dinner, and when it was over he sat out on the club balcony, gazing at the stars and thinking if Edith Price had returned. It was very rude of him, but truth compels us to say, that he did not waste one thought either on Amicia or Florry Carlton. The seed sown ten days ago had shot up and overshadowed him.

After Harry had sat there two hours or more, he came to himself, and said,

'I must write to Edward, or the poor fellow will be running away from Alice to look after me.' So he went into the writing-room and wrote as follows :

'Dear Ned,—You must have wondered very much at my sudden disappearance, and so must the ladies, to whom I owe a thousand apologies. But I really could not help it. I was forced to go at a moment's warning, and besides, I did not like to disturb your pleasure; I suppose I ought to say your *happiness*. The telegram which Mr. Beeswing put into my hand informed me that poor Mrs. Price was dead, and I felt at once that I must run up to town to see about the funeral. I have not yet seen Edith Price, she only returns to town to-night, but I shall see her to-morrow morning, and I will not forget to say everything to her from you that ought to be said.

'It is very strange, and it sounds brutal, but I feel happier since I have been in town than I was either at Heath Lodge or Ouzelmere. You need not shock any of the ladies by repeating this, and of course you will keep our relations to the Prices an inviolable secret. I do not think I shall be able to come down again to Ascot, as in the next three days I shall have much to do. On Saturday I conclude you will return to town, and then we shall meet again.

'In the mean time, believe me, dear old fellow, ever yours,

'HARRY FORTESCUE.

'P.S. Pray give my best congratulations to Alice Carlton. Though I was so dull down there, I was glad for your sake to see that it was all right.'

When he had finished this letter, Harry thought it best to send it by railway parcel.

‘If it goes by post, Edward won’t get it till the afternoon.’

So Harry Fortescue, like a good fellow, and not at all like a bloated aristocrat, went off to the Waterloo Station with his parcel and booked it for Ascot, and then he went home to Mrs. Boffin’s, and slept that night better than he had done for ten days. Was it that he looked forward to seeing Edith Price in the morning? What a strange selfish thing love is! What a mixture of motives! Here was Harry Fortescue deeply afflicted at the blow which had fallen on Edith Price, grieving for her with all his heart, and yet rejoicing, at the bottom of that very heart, that her mother’s death was the means of bringing her back to town, that he might see her once more.

‘It was quite a mistake her going out as a governess, and if I can help it she shall not return to Norfolk. What is Mary to do now her mother has gone? No; she shall never return to Norfolk. And with this protestation ringing in his drowsy ears, Harry Fortescue dropped off to sleep.

## CHAPTER LXV.

### EDITH PRICE RETURNS TO TOWN.

EDITH PRICE had been very kindly received by the Blicklings. They liked her very much at once—that is to say, Mr. and Mrs. Blickling liked her; and as for the children, they were absolutely in love with her. Children are so apt to adore a new governess, very much as they worship a new toy. The charm of novelty had not time to wear off, so they ran about with her in the garden, kissed her at least fifty times a day, sat one on each side of her, and called her every other moment ‘dear thing’ and ‘darling.’ Edith Price, therefore, had every reason to be satisfied with her new position, and yet after all she would have given a good deal to be back in Lupus-street. She was always fretting herself as to how her mother was, and how Mary would manage to exist without her.

‘I seemed to be of so little use to them when I was there,’ she said, ‘and yet now I see that I was of great use to them. If it had not been for that tempting salary I would never have left them.’

So difficult is it to be quite content under any circumstances. So it went on, and Sunday came, and Edith went to Blickling church with the Blicklings. The weather was lovely, and the trees and walks fine; but all the way to church, and all the way back, and we are sorry to say even occasionally in church, Edith Price thought of that walk to St. Barnabas’ with Harry Fortescue—Edward Vernon had now quite dropped into the background—and of all he had said on the way back.



‘I see it all much more clearly now,’ she said. ‘But what could he see to love in a poor orphan like me?’

Edith, as she thought this, little dreamt how soon she was to be an orphan, indeed a double orphan, deprived of both her parents. And yet there the fact remained in her mind that Harry Fortescue, one of the noblest-hearted of men in her experience, and also one of the best-looking, had deliberately made her an offer of marriage, which she had refused.

‘It was very cruel, but I could not help it. What else could I do?’

Was the leaven of love working in her heart too, and had the little seed which Harry had thrown down, as it were by the way-side, sprung up and begun to show its tiny green blade above the earth?

So Edith went on all that Sunday thinking and thinking. Governesses have no time to think on any other day of the week. They are free after the children have said their collect and catechism, and gone thrice to church. And as she thought and thought, Harry Fortescue became more heroic. Now that she was farther removed from him, he grew more and more noble; like a great mountain, his character showed its true proportions at a distance.

By Sunday night Edith Price had quite made up her mind that some day or other Mr. Fortescue would make some woman supremely happy as a husband, and when she woke up on Monday morning she said to herself,

‘He took me so unawares. If he had only given me a little more time to know him better, perhaps I might not have refused him so rudely. As it was, I hurt his feelings, but I could not help it.’

Then she went to her day’s work; and what between prayers, and music, and geography, and history, and French, and ‘all the elements of a liberal education,’ she forgot Harry Fortescue for a season, and was quite happy with her pupils. The evening before, that is, on the Sunday evening, Mrs. Blickling had asked Edith, as the children said, ‘to dine downstairs,’ and she and Mr. Blickling were so charmed that Mrs. Blickling said when they went to bed, she hoped they might often have the pleasure of seeing her in that way, and Edith had gone to bed glad and happy. On the Monday night she went to bed glad and happy too, but it was because she had thought a little more of Harry Fortescue, and wondered what he was doing at the races, for she knew he was going to Ascot. So she fell asleep thinking of Harry, and so she slept till six o’clock, when a maid came to her bedside and said,

‘You must get up at once, miss; here is a telegram for you.’

Edith took the telegram, with her eyes full of sleep, and her heart full of Harry Fortescue, if it was conscious of anything, and when she had opened and read it mechanically it told her:

'Mrs. Nicholson, No. — Lupus-street, London,  
To

Miss Edith Price, Blickling Park, Norfolk.

'You must come up at once. Mrs. Price is very ill.'

O those cruel telegrams! they tell us so much, and yet they say so little; bare facts without a word of explanation. They are heart-breaking in times of grief, and tantalising on occasions of joy. For good or bad, no one was ever satisfied with a telegram.

All that Edith could see or say was that she must go back to town at once. There was an afternoon express which she could catch. Blickling was too far for the morning fast train; there was no hurry, therefore. What is the use of hurrying when hurry is of no use? Mrs. Blickling, when she heard of her trouble, was as kind as a mother to her. They would send her to the station, ever so many miles across country. She hoped Mrs. Price would recover, and that Miss Price would return in a day or two. Vain hope; for even before Mrs. Nicholson had sent that telegram Mrs. Price was past all worldly care. She was only in her agony five minutes. To break the bad news the good woman first sent that telegram, and then, in an hour or two, she sent another, which reached the station just before Edith arrived at it in the Blickling carriage on her way to town.

'Here is another telegram,' said the station-master; 'just arrived.'

Edith took it with a feeling of despair, and read:

'Too late, Miss Edith. Mrs. Price is no more.'

'Stand back for the London train,' called out the porters and station-master, as the express came screaming and hissing into the station, like a monster as it was.

Edith crumpled up the paper in her hand, stepped into the train, and in a moment more was on her way to London. It was past ten when she reached Lupus-street, worn out with fatigue and sorrow. Good Mrs. Nicholson met her at the door, and her first words were:

'O, Miss Edith, I am so glad to see you! I knew you would come. But Mr. Fortescue has been here hours ago, and he has given all the orders that are necessary.'

'Let me go up to her at once,' said Edith, passing Mrs. Nicholson, and flying upstairs.

'Miss Mary is in bed and asleep, poor thing!' cried Mrs. Nicholson, mistaking Edith's meaning. Her words had reference to the dead, and not to the living. It was not to her sister, but her mother, that she was flying. In a moment more Edith Price was in her mother's room, alone with all that remained of her, bending over the wan wasted face, and covering it with kisses and tears.

Then, after a few sad minutes, she went to Mary's room, and kissed her and woke her up, and the sisters wept together, remembering their mother. They would have sat together, holding each other in their arms, half the night, but Mrs. Nicholson would not suffer it. She made Edith come down and have some food.

'You must be famishing, Miss Edith. I'll be bound you never tasted anything all the way up.'

'I did not,' said Edith; 'but I did not want it. I don't want it now.'

'But you must eat, you know, Miss Edith. Consider what you have to go through.'

'Very true,' said Edith, suffering herself to be crammed like a fowl by Mrs. Nicholson.

'Mr. Fortescue has been very kind,' said Edith sadly.

'Kind is not the word, Miss Edith,' said Mrs. Nicholson, who, as you know, was Harry's most enthusiastic champion. 'He's as good as gold, and as true as steel. When I think of him, I say to Betsy, "Betsy, if all the young men were like Mr. Fortescue, there wouldn't be so many aching hearts after women were married."''

'Yes,' said Edith; 'he has been very kind. Did he say anything?'

'Bless me, I forgot!' said Mrs. Nicholson. 'He said he hoped you would allow him to see you to-morrow.'

'Very well,' said Edith, 'I will see him to-morrow; and now, Mrs. Nicholson, I think I had better go to bed.'

'It is all ready for you, Miss Edith—your old bed; and may you have some sleep. God will send it you, I am sure; for you deserve it, Miss Edith.'

So Mrs. Nicholson lighted Edith up to bed; and then she climbed up to her own couch in the back attic, which she shared with Betsy.

'Dear me,' she said, 'what a world of trouble this is! How should we ever get on if we hadn't to work, instead of sitting idle all day, thinking of our sorrows!'

And then the helpful woman lay down and slept the slumber of the good; while over the way the ferocious Mr. Leek was also lost in sleep, and possibly dreaming of the good time coming, when all the men and women in this country should wear red caps, and it would be a hanging matter if any one could not prove that he had lived on vegetables alone three days in the week.

'Then, and then only,' said Mr. Leek, muttering between his teeth in his sleep, 'will greengrocers 'ave their just rights.'

## CHAPTER LXVI.

HARRY FORTESCUE SEES EDITH PRICE, AND HAS AN INTERVIEW WITH BOWKER.

WHEN Harry Fortescue woke next morning, his first thought was to fly to see Edith, and his next that he would be a fool to go so early, and that he had better stay away.

'If she only came up to town so late, she will need rest, and rise late this morning. I must stay away till the afternoon.'

This he thought as he lay in bed, listening for the descent of the maid-of-all-work.

'There she goes at last,' said Harry. 'Poor domestic sloth—how she creeps and crawls downstairs!'

Then in due time came Mrs. Boffin's vigorous footfall. By that sturdy step alone the medical adviser of an insurance company would have passed Mrs. Boffin as a thoroughly healthy life, without even looking at her, much less stethoscoping her or feeling her pulse.

'Now it's my turn,' said Harry, after he had lain, or 'lien,' as the Psalms say, not 'among the pots,' but on what is quite as bad, the 'tenter-hooks of expectation,' whatever they may be, longing to get up, and yet not daring to do so till Mrs. Boffin had eaten 'her' breakfast.

From this, again, you may see what a vigorous woman Mrs. Boffin was, when even her lodgers were afraid to get up till she had devoured her morning meal.

Then Harry Fortescue shook the bedclothes from off his feet, and rose and had his breakfast, thinking all the time of Edith; and feeling sure that, after all, he would much rather be in town than at Ascot.

'It's very odd,' he said, as he turned out of Mrs. Boffin's, weeding in mouth—'it's very odd, but I like London much better than the country.'

He went, of course he went, to Lupus-street, his paragon of streets. It was half-past nine. There was Mr. Leek watching him, and wondering if he would buy 'some of them British Queens;' but Harry, though he saw him and his strawberries, would have nothing to say to either of them. Mr. Leek touched his hat, but Harry strode on across the street, and pulled the bell loudly. When Mrs. Nicholson came to the door, he said,

'Has Miss Price come?'

'Yes, she has, Mr. Fortescue. She come last night; but you can't see her yet—she's a-bed.'

'I only wanted to know if Miss Price had come. That's quite enough,' said Harry; 'I'll come back in the afternoon.' And with that he strode away.

'There 'e goes,' said Mr. Leek; 'a proud hinsolent peacock as strutted. An 'onest greengrocer touches 'is 'at to 'im, and ever so much as gives 'im a nod. Yes, what we want is 'eads. might 'ave bought one punnet.'

But Harry Fortescue neither heeded him nor his strawberries. In his mind he was soaring up into some seventh heaven; and in his body he was making his way to the Park, where he might sit on a bench under his favourite tree, and seem to look at the gay crowd, and really think of Edith.

Much better to be here than sweltering in a box at Ascot, looking on at a pack of people about whom one does not care a bit. I wonder how Ned gets on, though, and if he has got my letter.'

So Harry Fortescue sat and thought; and at last, when the sun shone higher and the friendly shade deserted him, he walked into the park, called a hansom, drove to the club, and read the papers.

That he was hungry, and had luncheon; and at three o'clock he came home as at Mrs. Nicholson's door again.

'Yes, Miss Edith is up, and will be glad to see you,' said Mrs. Nicholson.

With a flutter at his heart, Harry Fortescue went upstairs; and in the poky back drawing-room, he saw Edith and Mary. Mary was wan and thin, he thought, but looking more lovely than

'O, Mr. Fortescue,' said Edith; but she could get no farther. She had misreckoned her strength, and burst into tears.

'It has been such a comfort to me,' said Harry, 'to be able to give you any help in your great affliction.'

'It was so sudden,' said Edith sobbing, and still unable to check her tears.

'I think I had better go,' said Harry, who really did not know what to do or say.

'O, pray do not go,' said Edith; 'I shall be better presently.' So Harry Fortescue stayed, and talked a little to Mary till she recovered herself; and then they all talked seriously and quietly, and Harry seemed more like a brother to them than Edith's husband.

And time passed; and when Harry looked at his watch it was half-past four. Then he rose to depart. But before he left the room,

'There is one painful thing I must say before I go: Mrs. Nicholson tells me that Mr. Nail says the funeral must be on Monday day.'

'I know it already,' said Edith. 'It is terribly soon, but it must be helped.'

'Then it is fixed for Saturday morning,' said Harry; and he went to his sisters.

He had said his behaviour was more like that of a brother



than a lover during that sad interview: and this was perfectly natural and right. It must be a very brutal lover who would dare to make love to a girl over the unburied body of her mother. We do not say that lovers have never done it; but then lovers are sometimes such fools, and they have the excuse of the widow of Ephesus, who made love over the unburied body of her husband; but then widows are not girls, and their example ought not to be quoted against them. At any rate, Harry Fortescue had too much good taste and feeling to breathe one word of love to Edith that afternoon; and Edith quite understood it, and was very grateful to him for it. But there is a way of making love without words—by stealth, as it were; and Edith Price that evening felt that Harry Fortescue was more in love with her than ever.

'It is all over now, of course,' she said, 'and I have refused him; but I feel in my heart that he is in love with me, and that when I refused him I refused a noble heart.'

This time, when Harry Fortescue went out, he had eyes for the greengrocer, who really had what greengrocers seldom have—some strawberries freshly gathered that afternoon.

'Ave a punnet, Mr. Fortyskew?' said the bloodthirsty Mr. Leek, who before this had found out Harry's name from Betsy when she ran over one morning to buy some 'watercreases,' and had learned to pronounce it phonetically; 'ave a punnet, Mr. Fortyskew? 'ere's beauties.'

'These poor girls would like some strawberries, I daresay,' said Harry to himself. Then to Mr. Leek, as Love never does anything by halves, 'Yes, I will have two punnets;' for Love, as you all know, is like Naaman the Syrian, as well in its generosity as in its wrath. With Love it is ever 'be content, take two talents;' and this is why so many designing people prey on Love, and make money out of him, because he is proverbially blind, and cannot see their deceitfulness—too seldom, alas, punished by Gehazi's leprosy! If every one that cheated Love in London were smitten as the prophet's servant, the streets of this metropolis would be thronged with people walking up and down as white as snow.

But to return to Harry Fortescue. He ordered two punnets, and paid five shillings for them, bidding Mr. Leek, who now treated him as a regular customer, send them over to No. —.

'Yes, Mr. Fortyskew; certainly, sir, in a minute, sir. Hawful dispensation, sir, this 'ere sudden death of Mrs. Price. Death comes on us like "grass" in June. We walks up and down the beds and sees never a sprout; in 'alf an hour the bed's alive with 'em.'

But by the time Mr. Leek had ended this affecting comparison between death and asparagus, Harry Fortescue was out of hearing. He had no objection to buy the greengrocer's strawberries, but he would not listen to his moralising; but for all that, Mr. Leek

finished his sentence, and then went into Mrs. Leek in his back shop.

'There he goes, Fortyskew, Esquire, the aristocrat, who wouldn't so much as listen to an 'onest man. But I've made 'im pay for it, Jemima Anne; I've made 'im pay for it. Them British Queens only stood me at eighteenpence, which I've made 'im pay for them 'alf-a-crown.'

'Quite right, Leek, quite right,' said Mrs. Leek. 'Them aristocrats is 'anded over to us by 'Eaven to spile, and we do spile them, as the Hisraelites of hold spiled the Egyptians.'

By this time Harry Fortescue was far away towards the Pimlico Pier, and on his way to the Temple, to give notice to his clerk that he meant to come really to work the week after; but unfortunately he surprised Mr. Bowker giving a banquet in his chambers to some congenial spirits, who had gathered round him and his stout, in consequence of his 'stunning' speeches at Cogers' Hall.

The banquet had been fixed for five o'clock precisely; and Mr. Bowker had even issued a card for it, on which was written this:

'MR. BOWKER,  
AT  
'OME.  
PUMP-COURT, JUNE 15TH,  
T.W.B.S.'

In the corner, opposite to these mysterious initials, was written, in Mr. Bowker's best hand—and in fact the whole card was his handiwork—'W. B. expects an hanser.' From which, and other peculiarities of the card, it may be seen that it is very certain that Mr. Bowker is not a candidate for the solicitors' examination, as he would most certainly be plucked for spelling.

But to come back to Mr. Bowker's card. What was the meaning of those letters, T.W.B.S.? If all the rest of the world were ignorant of their signification, Mr. Bowker's world well knew it. Those mysterious initials simply said to the initiated, 'There will be speaking.' Such a genial company could not part till some flowers of oratory had been gathered from the lips of Bowker and others. The 'at 'ome' was modest but ample. It consisted of 'beefsteaks and onions, and plenty on 'em.' Those were Mr. Bowker's very words when he gave his orders to Martha Briggs, the old laundress; 'and take care that they are 'ot,' he added. Then there was Cheshire cheese and radishes to follow, and the whole was washed down by foaming pots of stout.

We are sorry to say that this banquet of the gods was very much disturbed by the sudden appearance of Harry Fortescue just as the steaks and onions had vanished, and the cheese and radishes were being brought down the staircase by the old woman. The oak, of

course, was not sported, that is, the outer door which had defied Edith's attack was not shut. Harry Fortescue, therefore, ran up the wooden stairs, and made his way into his chambers without in the least knowing the orgy that was happening, and before the old sloth on the stairs could stop him. Had he known that Mr. Bowker was at high jinks in his rooms, he would not have rushed in; but as he knew nothing about it, and only thought, from the universal onionism of the staircase, that the old laundress had been indulging in a debauch of that wholesome but loud-smelling esculent over her tea, he came unawares upon all that jovial company of orators.

He arrived, too, at a very critical moment. It was just in the interval between the steaks and cheese that Mr. Docket, the managing clerk of Sharp, Snap, and File, of Staple's-inn, had proposed the 'ealth of what he called their "'Hamphitriton," William Bowker, Esquire.' There sat the 'Hamphitriton' modestly at the end of Harry's law-table, 'prepared but ready,' as another of the company said, 'to "alectrafry" them with 'is heloquence,' and all the rest were rising and draining their 'alf-pint pots, and calling out, 'Ere's your 'ealth, Bowker;' 'Long life to you, Bowker;' 'Ere's to our next merry meeting,' and so on, and so on.

It so happened that as all faces were turned to Bowker, and he sat at the end of the long law-table, opposite the door, it was only Bowker who saw that it was his master, and not the old laundress, who had entered the room. But all these clerks and law-writers knew that something must have happened, for the face of Bowker—which up to that very moment had been jolly and rubicund, and his eyes full of that fire of oratory with which he was just about to overwhelm his audience—suddenly changed to an ashen hue, while his eyes all at once became as dull and bleary as over-ripe gooseberries. But even in that moment of trial Mr. Bowker felt that something must be done, and that something was to apologise to Harry. He started on his feet, therefore, rather prematurely, while the volley of compliments was still ringing in his ears, and exclaimed,

'Mr. Fortescue, sir, I 'umbly asks your parding.'

You all know, or ought to know by this time, that Harry Fortescue was not a man to spoil sport. It even consoled him, so near akin is pathos to humour, to have come from that sad meeting in Lupus-street to this ludicrous festivity in Pump-court. He reflected too, that Mr. Bowker had nothing to do, except to draw his weekly wages, and that as he and Edward were lazy themselves, so would their clerk be. Like master, like man, he thought; and as he thought he forgave Mr. Bowker his impertinence, and fairly burst out laughing, in which the whole company heartily joined. They were just in that state when the wine is in, but the wit is not out, and they had drunk just enough beer to be keenly alive to a joke. When Harry Fortescue recovered his countenance, he said,



'I am glad to see you so comfortable, Bowker, and I hope you and your friends will have a pleasant evening.'

'Ark to 'im calling of him Bowker!' said one of the guests. 'Why, he's a jolly good fellow!'

Then, with a happy inspiration, some one caught at the phrase, and roared out, 'Mr. Fortescue's 'ealth, for he's a jolly good fellow.'

So Harry's health was drunk in his own rooms, Mr. Bowker leading the chorus, and in the midst of it he escaped and fled from that room and that staircase redolent with beer and onions, nor did he stop till he stood on the Thames Embankment.

'That fellow Bowker!' he said. 'But he'll have to mend his ways. Next week I shall begin to work in chambers, and then no more high jinks for Bowker.'

## CHAPTER LXVII.

### HARRY'S SECRET OOOZES OUT.

WE forgot to say that, when the races were over on Tuesday, it was settled that the Heath Lodge party should walk over on Wednesday morning and see the grounds at Ouzelmere.

'It will be something to do,' said Lady Pennyroyal, 'before the races begin.' Lady Charity, kind old soul, at once consented, for she wished to bring Alice and Edward as much together as possible. Amicia did not object, nor Florry, of course; the latter, because the arrangement would please her sister; the former, because Florry could do her no harm now that Harry Fortescue was away.

Amicia awoke very early that Wednesday morning, quite as early as Harry Fortescue in fact, but for a very different reason. She was pining because she had lost her love; he, because he was just about to find her. In the one case it was the wakefulness of despair; and in the other the watchfulness of hope.

'I think we had better start for Ouzelmere as soon as we can,' said Lady Charity.

'The sooner the better,' said Amicia. 'The sooner we go, the sooner it will be over.'

Edward Vernon was naturally anxious to go, and so it happened that they were off and away to Ouzelmere, by that short cut across the heath which belonged to the lord of the manor, before Harry Fortescue's letter to Edward Vernon arrived.

When they reached Ouzelmere they found the whole party walking on the terrace, and they set out at once to explore the domain of fifty acres. Any auctioneer who described those grounds as laid out with a taste regardless of expense would have been quite right. There were the best grapes, the best peaches, and the best fruit of every description in the country round. It was popularly reported

that every radish eaten at Ouzelmere cost the spirited proprietor half-a-crown. As you may reconstruct a lion from the tip of one of his claws, so you may calculate the expense of keeping up Ouzelmere from that one culinary fact. Then there were all about the grounds the choicest firs and deciduous trees—maples that in autumn set the woods ablaze; and in the summer, beds of the choicest rhododendrons, that made the whole garden glow. On and on through these plantations of rare shrubs the party went, now stopping to admire the view, now pausing to pluck a rose, till the end of the domain was reached, and they had to turn, or go on through a grove of firs to the native heath.

It so happened that Alice and Edward led the party a good way in front. Those behind respected the feelings of young lovers, and would not hurry them by treading on Love's heels; so it was, that when they came to the turning-point, when they must either double back to the house or push on through the wood, Alice said to Edward,

'The fragrance of that pine-wood is so balmy, let us go on. We have had enough of art, now let us try the charms of nature.'

To hear was to obey with Edward, and they were well on among the tall trees before the rest came up.

'I suppose we must follow them,' said Lady Pennyroyal as she crossed the boundary; and where she went the others followed.

'See,' said Florry to Amicia, 'there is a gipsy encampment on the heath. Let us turn back.'

'Let us rather press on,' said Amicia. 'Who can tell whether we may not have our fortunes told?'

'Mine is told already,' said Florry sadly.

'And mine is yet to tell,' said Amicia proudly, as she dashed on after Alice and Edward, who had stopped at the verge of the wood before the encampment on the open heath.

It was the usual gipsy-wagon; the same sharp-eyed, middle-aged women, the same wrinkled old cronès, the same brown half-clad children, and the same bright-eyed, olive-cheeked maidens.

But there was one of them whom Amicia recognised at once. It was Sinaminta, the woman whom they had met under King Edward's Oak at High Beech, whose nomad family had been attracted to Ascot by the races.

Nor was the recognition on her side alone. When Amicia went up to her and said, 'We have met before,' Sinaminta answered in a moment,

'Yes, we have met before. I see many here whom I met before,' she added, glancing round the rest of the party, who had by this time come up. 'But I miss one, and that one the gentleman who spoke most to me. Where is he? Does he not come to the races?'

'It is for you to tell us where he is,' said Amicia.







J. A. Pasquier, del.

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LADY SWEETAPPLE DECLINES TO HAVE HER FORTUNE TOLD.

‘Yes,’ said Florry, ‘do tell us where he is.’

‘Can’t you guess where he is?’ said Sinaminta mockingly. ‘Two pretty ladies, both asking at once of a poor Romany where a handsome young man is. He was with you under King Edward’s Oak; why has he not come with you to the heath?’

‘We will not tell you, Sinaminta,’ said Amicia. ‘It is for you to tell us where he is.’

‘We do not know where he is,’ said Florry passionately; ‘and we both wish so much to know.’

‘Ah,’ said Sinaminta, still in the same mocking tone, ‘you both want to know so much! I can tell you. He is with a third lady whom you do not know—that same young lady of whom I spoke to you under the oak.’

‘Do you mean the dark young lady in the background?’ said Amicia very incautiously, in her anxiety of heart.

‘Yes,’ said Sinaminta, ‘he is with her. How can you doubt it, if he is not with you?’

‘I don’t believe it,’ said Florry. ‘I believe he is somewhere else.’

‘Believe it or not, as you like,’ said Sinaminta. ‘I will say no more.’

Then she turned to Edward Vernon and Alice, and wanted him, with a whine so different from the free way in which she had just been speaking, to have his fortune told, ‘and the pretty lady’s.’

‘We don’t want it told,’ said Edward; ‘we know it already.’

‘You had better give her something, dearest,’ whispered Alice to Edward, ‘or she will be saying something dreadful, and I shall never get it out of my head.’

‘Anything rather than spoil our holiday,’ said Edward; and as he spoke he crossed Sinaminta’s hand with half-a-sovereign.

‘And shall I not tell yours?’ said the gipsy to Amicia.

‘I can tell my own fortune,’ said Amicia.

‘Nor yours?’ said Sinaminta, turning to Florry.

‘No, nor mine. I don’t believe in fortune-telling.’

‘Yes, proud ladies,’ said Sinaminta, ‘you will both believe when you hear that the handsome young gentleman prefers the dark young lady to both of you.’

‘Of course we shall believe it when we know it,’ said Amicia turning away, her heart again filled with vague fears of E.P. and her influence.

‘Those gipsies are a great nuisance,’ said Lord Pennyroyal, as they slowly retraced their steps through the wood. ‘They ought to be put down by the good sense of the community, as well as by act of parliament. Caravans, too, ought not to exist. Here we have a good example of this. A pack of idle gipsies, squatting on the common, burning the lord of the manor’s heath. I see, by the

gorse which grows all about, that the soil is good. It ought to be enclosed, every acre of it; and, if it were mine, I would break it up and sow it with sugar-beet.'

By the time he had ended, the party were again on Ouzelmere land; and, shortly afterwards, Lady Charity and her two chickens struck off from the rest across the heath, and got back to Heath Lodge before twelve o'clock. The first thing that met Edward's eyes was the railway parcel, directed in Harry's hand. If he had been at all of a reticent nature, he would have taken the parcel up to his room, or gone out of doors with it, and read it, reserving to himself the right to say nothing about it, if it were not for Harry's interest. But Edward Vernon was not one of those sluggish deliberative natures. He lived for and with his friends; he was gregarious, not solitary; so he cried out at once,

'Here's a letter from Harry. Now we shall know all about him.'

Lady Charity stood ready to listen; but we are sorry to say that Amicia was rude, very rude.

As soon as Edward opened the letter, and his face changed on reading it, she snatched it out of his hands, read it, threw it on the ground without saying a word, ran up to her room, and was not to be seen by any one but Lady Charity for the rest of the day.

The blow had fallen when she least expected it. She had made Edith Price safe, as she thought, and at Ascot she felt herself quite a match for Florry Carlton; but here something providential had happened, something which it had never entered into her calculations to guard against. The mother of the rival she had so much dreaded had died, and the mere intelligence of that calamity had been enough to recall Harry Fortescue to London, and to throw him into the power of Edith Price. It was too dreadful. She would not and could not bear it. And though at last Lady Charity mounted the ladder and forced her to unlock the door of her cabin, she found her deaf to any words of comfort, and quite resolved not to go to the races that day.

'What is to be done?' said Lady Charity in despair; for Lady Charity was the pink of politeness—the carnation or picottee, we might almost say, she was so polite—and you must know that her last words on leaving Lady Pennyroyal had been,

'Well, remember we reckon on your making your way to our box to-day.'

'I don't care what's to be done,' said Amicia. 'They may go to the box and welcome, only I won't go to it;' and then she burst into tears of mortification.

'I think I will send Mr. Vernon over to say that you are unwell, and that I am staying with you to nurse you, and that they



are welcome to the box. Poor fellow, it will be very dull for him here.'

'Do as you like,' said Amicia sobbing. 'I am quite broken down, and can't go.'

'But, darling, did he say anything horrible in that letter?' asked Lady Charity. 'Is he going to be married?'

'Not so bad as that, quite,' sobbed Amicia; 'but very bad. Edith Price's mother has died suddenly, and Harry Fortescue rushed back to town to see about the funeral; and Edith Price is coming back to town. And by this time they have met, and all my plans are wrecked and ruined.'

'I don't see why a young man should marry a governess, however pretty she may be, when it is only proved that he has gone back to town to bury her mother.'

'That's only because you don't know Harry,' said Amicia. 'He would marry any one he likes, governess or no governess. And now this artful little wretch will get hold of him and marry him. Did you not hear what the gipsy said?'

'Don't be so silly,' said Lady Charity. 'I don't know, of course, what Mr. Fortescue may do, young men nowadays are so very strange and free-thinking; but as for putting any faith in what that vagabond woman said, I think it quite ridiculous.'

'That's only because you're not in love with Harry,' said Amicia with a fresh flood of tears. 'Besides, she only says now what she said at High Beech.'

'Of course she says the same thing now,' said Lady Charity. 'She made a chance hit then which she saw went home, and now she sticks to it—that's all. Now do be reasonable.'

But Amicia would not be reasonable; and so Edward Vernon ran across to Ouzelmere just in time to catch the Pennyroyals, and to accompany them to the Charity box, as he called it.

Lord Pennyroyal was still resolute about his horses, and so the whole party had to trudge across the short cut and along the dusty road; but it was a sight to make every husband rejoice to behold how well Mrs. Marjoram's conversion lasted. It was no outside dye, Mr. Beeswing said, when he saw them again on the cup-day, but the change of colour had gone right through the stuff; she had been dyed to the hue of a good-wearing wife, and she had been dyed ingrain. Not even Mrs. Barker could have been so loving to her husband, the gallant colonel, or so kind.

'This is almost as bad as the Runn of Cutch,' said Edward to Mrs. Marjoram, as they got upon the road.

'Ah, that dear Colonel Barker,' said Mrs. Marjoram, 'how I wish he were here to enjoy this fine weather!' In her heart we know Mrs. Marjoram still detested races; she could not be expected to praise them, but she showed her conversion in not denouncing in



an uncharitable manner amusements in which others took pleasure. Nor was she perpetually reminding Mr. Marjoram that she had come to Ascot for his pleasure alone. She had ceased to be a domestic martyr, and begun to be a faithful wife.

But we have no time to dwell on this delightful change.

Long before Edward Vernon had reached the Charity box, Alice Carlton had found out that he had heard from Harry Fortescue, and she was now bent upon that explanation which had been promised to her at High Beech.

'If you love me, Edward,' she said, in that sweet lover's voice which is not quite a whisper, 'you will tell me all about it, for Florry's sake.'

'I had much rather tell it for yours,' said Edward.

'Then tell it for mine; only tell it, and tell it at once, or I won't love you one bit.'

Whether Edward Vernon was really afraid that Alice would pout and play the tyrant as she had threatened, or whether he was so much in love with her that he forgot everything else but her desire, we cannot say; but certain it is that before they left that Charity box Edward Vernon had told Alice the whole story of Harry's connection with the Prices, and that Alice and he had now no secrets on the subject.

'Was I not right in saying that it could all be explained?' he asked, as they sat side by side and alone, though in the midst of their friends.

'Yes, and nobly explained,' said Alice. 'It makes me proud of you, and,' she added, 'of having Harry Fortescue as my friend. But tell me one thing more: is Harry in love with Edith Price, and is she very charming?'

'She is not nearly so charming as another young lady I could name,' said Edward; 'but as for Harry's being in love with her, all I can say is, I know nothing about it. If he is in love, he has not taken me into his confidence.'

'Thank you so much, for poor Florry's sake. I feel when I see you that Harry is not in love yet with Florry, but it will be a comfort to know that he is not in love with any one else.'

'Put not your trust in men,' said Edward; 'their hearts are so deceitful.'

'But I put my trust in you,' said Alice.

'O, of course,' said Edward, giving her just one little nudge; 'but then, you know, the present company are always excepted.'

So now Harry Fortescue's 'inviolable secret' was revealed, for when three people know a secret it is no secret. As soon as Edward Vernon's back was turned—for, as in duty bound, he returned to dine at Heath Lodge—Alice Carlton repeated what she had heard to Florry, and Florry told it all to Lady Pennyroyal.

‘How very noble in those young men to have supported a destitute family so long!’

‘Very noble,’ said Florry with a sigh, for she could not help feeling, if Harry Fortescue’s generosity were to end in his marrying Edith Price, it would have been much better for her if he had not been generous at all.

‘And this explains all that mystery about the advertisement,’ added Lady Pennyroyal. ‘When we were all so hard upon Mr. Fortescue after breakfast at High Beech, some of us thought he would turn out to be very wicked or very silly; but though he could have justified himself, he never opened his mouth; he was, in fact, martyr to his generosity.’

‘Yes, we were all very unjust to him,’ said Florry, cut to the heart at the recollection of that scene she had with him in the conservatory.

‘I really must tell Lord Pennyroyal all about it,’ said Lady Pennyroyal. ‘He, I know, thought the advertisement was mixed up in some way with gambling debts, and there is nothing that he hates so much. But there is one thing which he admires above all things—generosity in others; and though you will scarcely believe it, my dear, in great things Lord Pennyroyal is one of the most generous men in the world.’

‘I think every one who had an unfavourable feeling against Mr. Fortescue is bound to make him amends,’ said Florry, hardly restraining herself from bursting into tears.

So Lady Pennyroyal that very night before dinner told the whole story to Lord Pennyroyal, who said it was very generous and very quixotic, and in such young men too.

‘I have heard of young men being generous to this person or that; but that they should take upon their shoulders the support of whole family for so many years passes my comprehension. It was very noble, but, I repeat it, very quixotic.’

That was all that Lady Pennyroyal could extract from her husband in praise of Harry and Edward.

But for all that, Lord Pennyroyal, though he was no gossip, went and told the story to Mr. Marjoram, and Mr. Marjoram told it to his wife.

‘I do think,’ said Mrs. Marjoram, ‘it’s the most noble unostentatious act of munificence I ever heard of. Depend upon it, these young men will have their reward in heaven. I am quite proud to reckon them among my friends.’

‘So am I,’ said Mr. Marjoram; and so the whole world at Ouzelmere knew the ‘inviolable secret,’ and thought it a great feather in Harry’s cap that he should have gone away from the races so quietly to help the fatherless and motherless in their affliction.

‘O, Alice,’ said Florry, when she went to bed that night, ‘how

unjust I have been to him, and how wicked to quarrel with him in the conservatory at home! Do you think he will ever come back to me?'

'Who can tell?' said Alice; 'or rather, why should he not come back? We have no proof that he has ever breathed a word of love to Edith Price.'

'No proof except a woman's instinct. But of one thing I am really glad, that he is not in love with Lady Sweetapple.'

## CHAPTER LXVIII.

### THE CUP-DAY, AND WHAT HAPPENED.

NEXT day was the cup-day, and it quite kept up its character for dust and discomfort. The country generally finds the dust and the company the discomfort; for if there be no room to move, and many thousand vehicles and human beings are all concentrated on Ascot Heath, how can any one be comfortable? But of all the uncomfortable people present on that day, Amicia was the most. There she sat in the Charity box, staring into vacant space. What did it matter to her that the royal party arrived at half-past one; the procession, consisting of five carriages, driving up the course to the royal enclosure, preceded by the Master of the Buckhounds, and received with 'the usual enthusiasm'? What did it signify to her that every available spot which could command a view of the royalties, as they came along in all the glory of scarlet and gold, was occupied by an elegantly-dressed woman, who held her own with an energy of which a mere man is quite incapable? What did she care that Mr. Merry's magnificent-looking chestnut colt, Sunlight, ran in a hood and blinkers for the St. James's Palace stakes, which he refused to win from sheer wilfulness, and was therefore stigmatised by all who had backed him as the most uncertain and ill-tempered horse that ever trod the turf; or that, after a splendid race between Baron Rothschild's Corisande and Bothwell, the baron's filly won the New Stakes by a neck? She hated the races, and all that belonged to them, now that she knew too well that Harry Fortescue was wasting his time in town with Edith Price. When the interval of an hour allowed for luncheon after the New Stakes came, she was sulky and would not stir from the box. The Pennyroyals walked home to luncheon as usual, but Amicia would not go with them. 'She was not at all hungry; she would sit there;' and there she would have sat till six or later and starved, had not that dear Lady Charity run over to Heath Lodge and brought her some sandwiches and a glass of sherry in a flask.

'Thank you so much,' said Amicia, munching the food mechanically. 'But do you think Harry Fortescue will return to us to-day?'

‘I am afraid not,’ said Lady Charity. ‘You know he rather implied in his letter that he should not be able to return to the races at all.’

‘Rather implied!’ said Amicia with indignation; ‘why, he said outright that he would not come. It is all on account of that Edith Price; I am sure of it.’

‘We do not know that he has the least intention of marrying her,’ said Lady Charity. ‘Why vex yourself with idle fancies?’

They could not discuss this very interesting matter at great length, for by this time the Pennyroyals had come back, and Edward with them.

‘Have you heard anything since you left of Mr. Fortescue?’ asked Amicia.

‘No, I am sorry to say I have not,’ said Edward; ‘but I saw Mr. Beeswing outside with Count Pantouffles; they have come down for the cup-day; perhaps they may have seen him in town. They will come into the box directly to see the race for the cup.’

In a minute or two after, the Count and Mr. Beeswing came in.

‘Have either of you seen anything of Mr. Fortescue in town?’ said Amicia. ‘He ran away from us on Tuesday, as you know, and he has never come back.’

‘I should have him cried if I were you,’ said Mr. Beeswing. ‘He ought to be ashamed of himself. Why don’t you take a leaf out of E.P.’s book, and advertise for him in the newspapers thus :

“Ascot Races.

“Sweetapple to Fortescue,—Come back, and all will be forgiven. E.P is a wretch.”’

‘It is far too serious a subject to jest about,’ said Amicia; ‘but if I thought an advertisement would bring him back, I would put one in at once.’

All this time Count Pantouffles had been bowing to the rest of the party. His bows always went by precedence; he would never have violated etiquette in that or in any other matter. First of all he bowed elaborately to Lady Pennyroyal; then to Lady Charity, as widow of an older baronet than Sir John Sweetapple; and now he was just bowing to Amicia before coming to Mrs. Marjoram and Florry and Alice. When he had solemnly bowed all round, and thus settled, as it were, the preliminaries of his conference, he turned to Lady Sweetapple, and said,

‘I can tell you something about Mr. Fortescue.’

‘O, do tell us!’ said Amicia and Florry in the same breath.

‘First, I will tell of himself,’ said the Count; ‘and next, I will relate what I have heard of himself.’

‘O, you spoke to him, then?’ said Amicia.

‘No, I have not,’ said Count Pantouffles; ‘I only bowed to him

yesterday in the Park. He was sitting on a chair smoking, and looking very happy.'

'Very ungrateful of him, I am sure,' said Amicia, 'to look happy when we are all so anxious about him. But I thought you said, Count, that you had heard something of himself? How could that be if you did not speak to him?'

'O, my lady,' said the Count with an exquisite grin, 'you cannot understand. I meant I had heard something about Mr. Fortescue.'

'And pray what was it?' said Amicia. 'And how did you hear it?'

'I heard it,' said the Count, 'from my valet, who, when he was brushing my hair last night when I was dressing for dinner, said, "You remember Mr. Fortescue, Count?" "Yes," I said, "I do remember him. What about him?" "He is going to be married to a young lady, Count. I heard it from Mr. Beeswing's valet this morning, who heard it from a greengrocer."'

'Mr. Beeswing's valet!' said Amicia in despair, for she well remembered that it was from him that Mrs. Crump had first heard of Edith Price.

'I don't believe, begging your pardon, Count,' said Mr. Beeswing, 'that my valet knows anything about such a marriage. Besides, valets are such gossips—worse than ladies'-maids by far.'

'Even valets tell the truth sometimes,' said Count Pantouffles with great gravity; 'and my valet told me the lady's name, which, he said, your valet had told him.'

'And the lady's name was—' cried Florry Carlton, anticipating even Amicia in her eagerness.

'Price,' said Count Pantouffles; 'Edith Price.'

'Edith Price! why, that's the E.P. of the advertisement!' said Mr. Beeswing.

'Yes, it is,' said Lady Pennyroyal, striking in; 'but we know all about that mystery. As soon as the cup is run for, Mr. Beeswing, I'll tell you the whole story. It is one of which Mr. Fortescue may be justly proud.'

'Here come the horses for the cup,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'Harry Fortescue must wait till the race is run. There they go—Sabinus by Newminster; he won the City and Suburban and the Metropolitan handicaps at the Epsom Spring Meeting, and the Beaufort cup at Bath, but he failed at Chester. There comes the French horse, Trocadero; what an odd name, Trocadero! it's a hill in Paris opposite the Champs de Mars. I wonder if any of you know where it is, and whether we shall ever hear of it again. He's a good horse, but he is six years old, and carries 9 st. 5 lbs. Then there's the Baron's Midsummer with Fordham up. I wonder if he will win? And Lord Wilton's Muster, and Sir J. Hawley's Morna



—she won the Oaks, did she not?—and Hester; not a bad-looking mare, Hester, with a light weight, 7 st. 2 lbs., the same as Sabinus. Well, I'm all for the young ones and the light weights. Pantouffles, will you back the old horse Trocadero against the young Sabinus?

'What are the odds?' said the Count.

'Four to one against Trocadero,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'I will give you four to one.'

'Done,' said Count Pantouffles, and the bet was made.

Then came the start, and the finish; and the end was, as you all ought to know, that Trocadero made most of the running, that he was waited on all the way by Sabinus and Muster, that at the distance Muster was beaten, and that Sabinus soon after quitted Trocadero, and won as he liked in a canter by four lengths.

'I have lost my money,' said Count Pantouffles, gracefully handing over his sovereign to Mr. Beeswing, who took it, and then went to Lady Pennyroyal's side, who told him the whole story about Harry and Edward's connection with the Prices. When she had done, she asked him what he thought of it.

'I think,' he said, 'it's the most chivalrous story I ever heard. Few young fellows would do such a thing in these times, and few old ones either. It is the more honourable to Harry and Edward because they are neither of them rich. It must have been some sacrifice to them to support that family.'

At the same time Amicia had been extracting all she could out of Count Pantouffles as to Harry's marriage, but that 'all' amounted to very little. The Count was positive that Mr. Beeswing's valet had told his valet that a greengrocer had told him that Mr. Fortesque was going to be married to Miss Edith Price, and that was all he could tell.

At this period of the discussion Mr. Beeswing was again taken into counsel. Did he know anything about it? Had he ever heard of such a thing? No, he had not.

'But my valet is a very clever fellow,' he said, 'and hears many things which I do not. I am afraid he is much more up to the marriages which are about to take place than his master is.'

'But to marry a nobody,' said Florry, with a spiteful glance at Amicia.

'And a governess,' added Amicia. 'I never can believe it.'

'Nor can I,' said Florry, which was remarkable as being the only opinion which she shared in common with Amicia.

'O, for that matter,' said Mr. Beeswing, 'if you take to those arguments it will be easy to confute you, and prove you to be wrong. You don't understand men. They are very different from women. They would marry a nobody or a governess as soon as look at them, and sooner. There is nothing that a man in love can't and won't

do. So pray let us have no more against Harry's marrying Miss Price, if she is nice, respectable, and beautiful, were she twenty nobodies and forty governesses.'

'He has too much self-respect,' said Florry.

'Too much good taste,' said Amicia, coming back to the old arguments.

'I would give a good deal to see any one who had seen this young lady,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'Here you, Edward Vernon, come out of that extremely warm corner where you have been sitting all the day, and tell us something. You know Miss Price, and have seen her often. Is she very good-looking?'

'I am sure I cannot tell,' said Edward. 'She used to be very good-looking as a child, but I have not thought of thinking her beautiful since she grew up.'

'Did you ever hear of a poor fellow so hopelessly in love? Take him away with you into your corner, Miss Alice, with his "thought of thinking." He is just like a lover, always using words in a non-natural sense. But I repeat it, I would give a great deal to see some one who has seen this young lady, and will tell us rationally and quietly what she is like.'

'I have seen her,' said Amicia, unable to restrain a sudden impulse.

'You seen her!' said Florry, in wonder.

'Yes, I have seen her, and so has Lady Charity. It was I who persuaded Lady Charity to get Miss Price that situation in Norfolk as a governess,' said Amicia.

'Why, then, you also are to be reckoned among the benefactors of the Price family,' said Mr. Beeswing satirically; 'but I shall not take your opinion of Miss Price; you feel too much interest in her to be impartial. I shall go and ask Lady Charity.'

With these words he left Amicia regretting that she had made that confession, and went to Lady Charity and said,

'Tell me now, Lady Charity, you have seen Miss Edith Price?'

'I have seen her,' said Lady Charity.

'And is she respectable and ladylike?'

'Perfectly so,' said Lady Charity. 'She is most ladylike, and her history will bear the strictest investigation.'

'One question more,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'Is she good-looking?'

'She is without exception one of the loveliest young women I ever saw,' said Lady Charity; 'a girl that any man might fall in love with; a good linguist too, and very accomplished in music.'

'Well then,' said Mr. Beeswing, looking round on all the faces in the box, which were turned towards him during this cross-examination—'well then, what reason in the world is there that Harry Fortescue should not marry Edith Price if he chooses it, and why should not this gossip between the valets be well-founded?'

‘You came in here to be a witness,’ said Amicia bitterly, ‘and on end by being a judge.’

‘Yes; but I am not a judge in my own case,’ said Mr. Beeswing. ‘I only wished to prove that Harry Fortescue has a perfect right to marry any woman he pleases, if she is ladylike and respectable and she has taken his fancy. But when to this is added the undoubted fact, out of your own mouths, that this young lady is very lovely, why, I should say, looking at all the facts of the case, and the sad sympathy which is now sure to spring up between them, that there was every probability of Harry’s marrying her. That is just about what it comes to. Don’t you think so, Lord Pennyroyal?’ or that worthy peer had been present at this part of the discussion.

‘I know nothing of probabilities,’ said Lord Pennyroyal; ‘but I think every man should please himself in marrying. As to his affording it, I do not know. He has enough for himself, and she, I believe, has nothing. If he marries her, he will have to economise, and that is always a good thing.’

With this thoroughly Pennyroyal dictum, the whole party quitted the Charity box; Amicia and Florry perfectly furious with Mr. Beeswing for taking Edith’s part, and both of them still farther depressed by the bad news which that empty Count Pantouffles had brought.

‘I don’t like Mr. Beeswing, Alice,’ said Florry. ‘He always rightens me so when he begins to talk of Miss Price.’

‘He needn’t have raised himself up to be such a champion for that young person,’ said Amicia to Lady Charity. ‘How much better Mr. Vernon behaved; he sat still, and would not say a word in her defence.’

The fact is, poor Edward was bound over to Florry’s side by his love for Alice.

## CHAPTER LXIX.

### WILL EDITH PRICE MARRY HARRY FORTESCUE?

Yes—that was settled: Harry Fortescue had every right to marry Edith Price if he chose, but would Edith Price choose to marry him? Marriage is a matter in which women always have the last word, as indeed they have it in so many other matters; and would Edith Price say that last little word ‘Yes’? Even at this late period of our story that remains to be seen. On Thursday afternoon, at the very time that Count Pantouffles was declaring that he was engaged to marry Edith Price, Harry Fortescue was in Lupus-street, paying a visit to Edith and Mary, but not one word did he say of love; he felt, at all events, that his lips were sealed on that subject till after the funeral. It was not quite so sad a visit as that of the day before, and the sisters were more resigned to their loss. There was not much conversation; and whenever

it flagged, Harry Fortescue consoled himself by looking at Edith, and repeating his confession of faith in her loveliness both of mind and body. He was grateful to her for being so grateful to him; grateful also to Mary, for rendering his visits possible; and, in the end, he went away still more in love than ever.

But what of Edith? Was she more in love, or at all in love, with Harry Fortescue? We have seen that her gratitude to Harry was rather a hindrance to her love. She would have loved him long ago had she not respected him so much. He was her ideal of all that was noble and generous—a god or providence to her. Now a woman may make an idol of a man and then marry him; but what woman would ever think of marrying a god? One or two of the old Greek women tried it, and we know what happened to them. They were burnt up, like Semele, by the terrible attributes of the object of their affections, or they came in other ways to grief, and not to matrimony. But still there was one chance for Harry, and that was the fact that this providence of the Price family had shown himself mortal. The divinity had comedown from his pedestal, and shown himself to be, after all, only a man with passions like any other man. Edith's reverence for Harry Fortescue received its first blow when he made her that offer; and though she refused him on the spot, we have seen that she quite felt she had refused a noble heart. But when she had made that reflection, and so confessed a leaning towards him, she put the feeling aside, as one quite impossible to be entertained or encouraged, at any rate for the present. Her first duty was towards her mother and her memory, and so long as those sad relics remained upstairs, Edith Price could think of nothing but her grief. Nay, she even went farther.

'He is very kind,' she said to Mary; 'but we will not trouble him long. When it is over, I will go back to Bleckling, and you must go to school, Mary. But we shall be independent, for I shall earn enough money to maintain us both.'

And then the two sisters embraced each other and burst into tears; for Edith knew how bitter it would be for her now to part from Mary, and Mary thought she would rather do anything than leave Edith and go to school.

'It can't be helped, you know,' said Edith. 'It is our duty, and it must be done.'

So Thursday went by, and Friday came—Friday, the last day of the races and the last day before the funeral. According to the newspapers, the last day of the Ascot meeting in 1870 was 'unquestionably the most agreeable of the four.' There had been rain, in the first place, and the dust was laid. That alone was enough to mark Friday with a white stone, for a day without dust at Ascot is as rare as the phoenix was in the days when there were phoenixes, a bird now denied to us, along with so many other blessings, because



of our unbelief. Then the racing was very good, and every one was in a good temper; but, for all that, we are quite sure that Amicia and Florry Carlton found that Friday anything but agreeable. The party all met as usual in the Charity box, but Florry and Amicia only met as wild beasts meet when they fall into the same pitfall—

‘A common feeling makes them wondrous kind;’

and under that feeling they forbore from tearing one another to bits, or, what is the same thing in women, from picking one another to pieces. Lady Pennyroyal and Lady Charity were pleasant and genial as ever, but they were getting sick of the races, and felt that they were only there to forward Edward Vernon’s suit to Alice Carlton. They, at least, were thoroughly happy, and rather wished the races would last for ever. As for Lord Pennyroyal and the Marjorams, they were defaulters on that day. As the slang phrase is, they failed to put in an appearance. Lord Pennyroyal had heard of a model farm in the neighbourhood which an enterprising London agriculturist had made out of the waste, and, after sowing it with sovereigns in trenching and fencing and road-making, he had actually sowed a hundred acres of it with Lord Pennyroyal’s favourite crop.

‘I would rather see a good crop of sugar-beet,’ said Lord Pennyroyal at breakfast, ‘than all the races that were ever run. I tell you what, Marjoram, let us walk over and see it.’

‘I am quite ready,’ said Mr. Marjoram.

‘And mayn’t I come too?’ said Mrs. Marjoram. ‘I should like it so much.’

‘But will you be able to walk so far, my dear?’ said Mr. Marjoram. ‘It is four miles there.’

‘And four miles back,’ said Mrs. Marjoram. ‘I can walk that distance easily.’

So that was settled, and the three trudged off through Swinley to Easthampstead to see the sugar-beet, and deserted the races.

Till the last moment of the last day, Amicia and Florry had buoyed themselves up with the hope that, after all, Harry Fortescue would return for that last evening. Florry had even gone so far in her calculations as to confide to Alice—

‘But, after all, what is the good of his returning now? He would spend all his time with that odious woman, and go back to town with her to-morrow. I should have no good out of him. No; on the whole, I hope he will not come.’

‘Ah, darling,’ said Alice, ‘I am afraid you say that because the grapes are sour. How I wish you were as happy as I am!’

But, though they both buoyed themselves up with the hope, hope is very often as treacherous as those bladders which bear bad swimmers out of their depth and then desert them to drown. Harry Fortescue did not return to Ascot, and both hope and apprehension



about him, or what he would do, were in vain. The races came to an end, and Florry Carlton and Amicia, the wild beasts, left their pitfall and retired, the one over the heath to Ouzelmere, and the other along the road to Heath Lodge, to spend the evening in pouting and sulking, and in bad resolutions of the retribution they would take on Harry Fortescue as soon as they met him.

'I will never speak to him again,' said Amicia to Lady Charity.

'O yes, you will, my dear,' said Lady Charity. 'I know you better. You will speak to him as soon as you see him.'

'I will never bow to him in the Row,' said Florry to Alice. 'I will never dance with him; I don't think him worth dancing with.'

'Pray do not say such dreadful things, darling,' said Alice, whose tears, like water in some soils, were always rather near the surface. 'You will make me cry if you go on so.'

'I don't care if I do,' said Florry savagely. 'Why should you be so happy while I am so miserable?'

'Don't reproach me for loving Edward,' said Alice; 'it really is not my fault.'

As she said this she threw her arms round her sister, and first she wept, and then Florry wept; not softly like Alice, but in great heavy thunder-drops of tears which rolled slowly down her cheeks.

It is really so dull at Ascot that we must rush back to town, only to find Harry Fortescue calling on the Prices. They were very sad, so that we have not made an exchange for the better in coming back to London. It was the last day that remained to them with all that remained of their mother. Next morning Mr. Nail was to come to perform his melancholy office, and then the sisters would be left alone on the earth.

There was little or no conversation; it flagged much more than it had done the day before. There the three sat, the girls sobbing and speaking now and then in a broken voice, and Harry gazing at Edith. Why did he go to visit them? What a heartless question! Was he not the only friend except Edward Vernon that they had on earth? and you all know why Edward Vernon could not visit them. Harry Fortescue was, therefore, quite justified in going to see the sisters every day. It was a comfort to them, and he would have been a brute not to go. Besides, was he not in love with Edith? You see, therefore, he had every reason to go, and even Mr. Leek on this melancholy occasion refrained from reviling him to Mrs. Leek as 'a hinsolent arysticrat.'

And all this time Edith was growing more and more grateful to Harry, fearing him less and respecting him less: growing in love with him you will say, but we do not say so; we only beg you to wait and see.

But before Harry Fortescue left the Prices that evening he had something to say, and he said it.

'I shall be here to-morrow at eleven,' he said, 'and go with *her* the cemetery.'

He said 'her' instead of 'it' because he had a heart; but that *le* word was enough to throw both the sisters into tears.

'We are both going with her too,' said Edith, sobbing. 'It is good of you to go with us.'

Then Harry felt he could do no more for them that day, and left *m* with his heart in his throat, and went down to the club and *ste* as follows to Edward Vernon:

'My dear Ned,—I am afraid you must think I have been behaving very badly, especially as I have not answered your kind letter.' He ought to have said that Edward had written to Harry on Wednesday night, expressing his sorrow at Mrs. Price's death and urging Harry to return if possible on Thursday or Friday. But the letter went on :) 'I have been very busy with the Prices, and there has been much to arrange about the funeral, besides trying to comfort them in their loneliness. To-morrow is the funeral, and something must be settled as to their future plans. I do not think it will ever do for Edith to return to Norfolk and leave Mary alone. I wish you would think over the matter and give me your advice. I suppose we shall soon meet. Do you return to-morrow? With many apologies to the ladies, and kind remembrances to both, believe me, ever yours,

HARRY FORTESCUE.'

'There!' said Harry, as he put a stamp on the letter, 'that is I mean to tell him at present. If Edith had accepted me, it would be quite another matter. What a stupid thing a refusal is when it prevents a man taking his best friend into his confidence!'

Then he dropped the letter into the pillar-post, and walked about the streets in a restless way till midnight.

'Twelve o'clock! I must get home, or Mrs. Boffin will think *m* returning to my late hours. I shall be glad when that dread-duty is over to-morrow.'

So Harry Fortescue went back to Mrs. Boffin's as fast as he could, and was soon in bed.

## CHAPTER LXX.

### THE FUNERAL, AND WHAT FOLLOWED.

WHEN Edward Vernon received Harry Fortescue's letter on Saturday morning he was in no little difficulty, and for a very good reason. Harry evidently expected him in town to obtain his advice, and yet Edward had accepted an invitation from Lady Pennyroyal the night before to return with them to Farthinghoe Castle and spend a few days. This was so kindly meant that Edward had felt he had no voice in the matter, and he knew Alice would be angry with him if

he refused. How, therefore, could he go to town to give Harry the benefit of his advice?

Amicia was not down when he received the letter. She was sulking in bed, we believe; but dear Lady Charity was there ready to make breakfast for Edward. She saw his perplexity at once, and asked him what it was. The tender-hearted Edward made a clean breast of it, and took her into his confidence.

'It wouldn't so much matter if it could be at all arranged that Miss Price should stay in town for a few days. If she put off her return to Blickling for a week, one would have time to turn round and consider the matter. As it is, she will be gone before I get back to town.'

You already know that Lady Charity was the kindest and most sympathetic woman in the world; so that the object was really right and proper, she would do anything to serve her friends, and she had taken very much both to Harry and Edward, particularly when she heard how nobly they had behaved towards the Price family.

'And so you very much wish Miss Price to remain in town a few days?'

'I do very much wish it,' said Edward. 'We shall then be able to see what is best to be done for them.'

'They can never stay in that dull wretched house where they lost their poor mother,' said Lady Charity. 'If they do, they will never recover their spirits.'

'I should think they needed a change very much,' said Edward.

'How would it do if I were to write to Miss Price, whom I already know and like extremely, and ask her to come with her sister and stay a week in my house before she returns to Norfolk? I am sure I can arrange it all with Mrs. Blickling.'

'I should say you were an angel, if I did not know it already,' said Edward warmly.

'So many people have called me "angel" lately,' said Lady Charity, laughing, 'that I begin to be afraid of the name. As for Amicia, I am sure I don't know what she will call me if she hears what I am going to do. But never mind, it is the right and charitable thing to do, and I mean to do it.'

'I am sure Harry Fortescue will be charmed, whatever Lady Sweetapple may be,' said Edward. 'If you write at once, Miss Price will get your letter to-night.'

'Then there's no time to lose,' said Lady Charity.

And so they both sat down and scribbled off their letters; and Edward ran away with them to the post, and just reached it before the box closed.

'That was a near thing,' he said; 'but never mind, there they are in the box, and Harry will get mine to-night. He will be disappointed, I know, but it can't be helped; and then that dear Lady

Charity's letter will cheer him up when he learns from Edith of the proposed arrangement. Of course she will accept it.'

Then he returned and had his breakfast, and found Amicia still upstairs. As Lady Charity poured out his tea, she said,

'Do you know, Mr. Vernon, I think it will be just as well not to say anything to Lady Sweetapple about my invitation to Miss Price. She will find it out for herself soon enough when she gets back to town.'

'Just as you please,' said Edward. 'But I must say I cannot see what Lady Sweetapple can have to say as to your inviting any one to your house.'

'Of course not,' said Lady Charity. 'I did not mean that. I only meant that as she is in very low spirits, I would not for the world say anything to her likely to make her worse.'

'O, I see,' said Edward, proceeding with his breakfast. 'Perhaps she might not like it.'

That morning Harry Fortescue rose with a feeling of oppression. Something horrid was about to happen to him: what was it? O, that sad function in Lupus-street. He had breakfast at nine; then he rushed out and walked about till ten. Then he went back to Mrs. Boffin's, and dressed himself in mourning attire. Punctually at five minutes to eleven he was at Mrs. Nicholson's. The hearse was already there, and the one mourning-coach which was to convey him and the sisters to Kensal-green. Why dwell on the sad particulars? The heavy coffin was brought down and placed in the hearse; then Harry and the sisters got into the mourning-coach. They crawled through the streets to Kensal-green in the glare of the June sun. The sullen mutes bore the coffin from the hearse into the chapel. The service was read, and the sisters sobbed the responses. Then all that was mortal of Mrs. Price was borne to the grave in that wilderness of tombstones. The handful of dust fell on the coffin. The three took one last look, and the gravediggers threw in the heavy clods. Hand in hand the sisters stood and gazed down, with Harry by their side.

'It is all over,' said Harry; 'let us go home.'

'Yes, let us go home,' said Edith in an apathetic voice, for she was stunned by sorrow.

When they reached the mourning-coach, Mary threw her arms round her sister and wept, and said,

'Let us never part, Edith.'

Edith put her tenderly on one side, and got into the coach first to hide her feelings, for her heart was too full. Harry put Mary in, and got in himself. In another moment the gloomy vehicle was rumbling back on its way to Lupus-street.

When they reached No. —, Harry left them to themselves. 'I will come back to see you this afternoon,' he said, and he was gone.



When he went back about four o'clock, he found Edith strangely resigned and full of her plans for the future. Almost her first words were,

'I must go back to Blickling directly, and Mary must go to school. On Monday I must see about it.'

'It is very soon,' said Harry.

'The sooner the better,' said Edith. 'I will no longer be a burden to you.'

'But you are no burden,' remonstrated Harry. 'It is a pleasure and a duty to help you and your sister.'

But for all that he could do or say, Edith was firm, or seemed to be firm, and Harry went away in despair. Before he left, he said,

'You will let me take you to St. Barnabas' to-morrow?'

'Certainly, if you wish it,' said Edith. And Harry Fortescue left them, feeling more completely wretched than he had ever been in his life.

'She is very hard-hearted, I am afraid,' he said. 'She might have been a little kinder, and stayed in town a little longer.'

But Edith Price was not hard-hearted, and she was only so firm because she felt if she gave way an inch she must have yielded altogether. For the first time in her life she was aware that her respect for Harry Fortescue had melted away into love, and yet she was afraid of him.

'Why are you so afraid of Mr. Fortescue, Edith dear?' said Mary, looking up into her sister's face.

'Because I *am* afraid of him,' said Edith. 'He is too good and too kind, and I cannot bear it.'

It fortunately happened that the conversation of the sisters was interrupted by Mrs. Nicholson, who insisted on their having a good tea and going to bed soon.

'Mr. Fortescue, when he went away, told me to look after you, Miss Edith, and I mean to do it. What with want of sleep and food you're worn to a shadow.'

'How can I sleep or eat,' said Edith, 'when I have no friends in the world but Mr. Fortescue and Mr. Vernon?'

'I think if I were you, Miss Edith, and I had only one friend in the world, and that friend was Mr. Fortescue, I should be as happy as a queen,' said Mrs. Nicholson. And then the good woman went on:

'But my orders is positive. You're to have a good tea and go to bed early, and Mr. Fortescue is coming to see you in the morning, and hopes to find you both much better. Bless my heart alive, if that isn't a pull at the bell. It never can be Mr. Nicholson come to look after "the bank."'

With these words Mrs. Nicholson ran down to the door, only to find that the postman had pulled the bell, and to run up again with the letter.



'Fancy my being so scared! But I always am scared a-Saturdays, when I think of Mr. Nicholson. It's only a letter for you, Miss Edith.'

'A letter for me!' said Edith. 'From whom can it be?' And he opened it mechanically.

Her face showed so much astonishment, that Mary at once wanted to know what it was.

'How ungrateful I was,' said Edith, 'to say that I had no friends! Here is a letter from that kind Lady Charity, who got me the situation, asking you and me, Mary, to spend a few days with her in London, before I go back to Norfolk.'

'O, Edith,' said Mary, 'I am so glad we shall not be parted, and I shall not go to school yet, and we shall both see Mr. Fortescue.'

'Hush!' said Edith; 'not so fast, Mary. We will have tea, and go to bed and think of it. I must ask Mr. Fortescue's advice before accepting Lady Charity's very kind invitation.'

With this wise resolution, the sisters took some food and went to bed. They felt lonely and wretched, all alone in the house, which, though it had ceased to be the house of mourning, was still so because they had been separated from their mother; but they were worn and weary, and soon sound asleep, locked in each other's arms.

When Harry Fortescue got home, he too was comforted by a letter from Edward, explaining why he could not come to town that day and give him the benefit of his advice, and ending thus:

'But, after all, it does not much matter, old fellow; for Lady Charity, with her usual kindness, has written to ask the Prices to stay with her a few days before Edith returns to Norfolk; so that we shall have plenty of time to consider what is best to be done for them.'

When Harry Fortescue had read as far as this, he threw down the letter, and burst out, as so many others had done,

'Why, this dear Lady Charity is a downright angel!'

What he did with himself between Saturday evening and church-time on Sunday is not known. No doubt he spent it in the way so satisfactory to lovers and so unsatisfactory to the rest of the world, in wandering up and down the streets and thinking of Edith Price. But on Sunday morning he was in Lupus-street at ten o'clock; and, having run the fire of Mr. Leek's tongue, he was soon after on his way to St. Barnabas', in time for the half-past ten service. This time, however, the church was so full that they all had to go over to the men's side, and sit together in the side aisle. It was shame and mortification to the vergers to see the sheep thus mixed with the goats; but he has to bear it every Sunday in June, and perhaps it is one of the trials specially sent to prove his faith.

But, whatever the vergers thought, Harry Fortescue thought it

very nice, and—must we own it?—Edith thought it nice too. She thought it very pleasant to sit and kneel and stand side by side with Harry, to bow when he bowed, and to sing out of the same hymn-book. For years the iron had entered into her soul, and now a stronger than iron had cast it out. Love had stolen in, at first as a little fancy, no bigger, and seemingly quite as harmless, as a tiny child. Young ladies say, ‘Let the boy in; we can always control him; ours are well-regulated minds.’ But when he is once in, he grows and grows so fast, the boy is man and master in a week, and carries all before him; and so it was with Edith Price.

We cannot say she was very attentive to her devotions. No woman can do two things at once, whatever men may be able to do. If a woman is in love, she is all in love; and the more she tries not to love, the more she loves. So Edith, when she said her prayers, saw not ‘Amen’ at the end of each of them, but ‘Harry.’ Sometimes, too, she saw ‘Harry’ in the middle of them, and, worse than all, at the beginning; and when the sermon came, and she tried to listen to the preacher, it was all the same. The end and object of his discourse seemed to be the saving grace of faith in Fortescue. Was not that a sad position for a young lady? And how was poor Edith Price either to get love out of her heart, or Harry Fortescue out of her head? So convinced was she of the absurdity of ever attempting to do this, that at last she gave up thinking of anything else, and thought of nothing but Harry Fortescue. Who shall talk of a ‘well-regulated mind,’ when one so staid and demure as Edith could offer no resistance to the enemy when he had once thrust one of his tiny feet through the chink in the door of her heart?

It was very pleasant, and they both wished, like Edward Vernon in the Charity box, that the service would last for ever. Edith was firmly convinced that she could sit there, soaring up on majestic organ-tones into an Elysium in which she might devote herself to contemplation of Harry Fortescue. That you call idolatry; but, in reality, love is nothing but another name for idolatry. It is man and woman worship in its purest form. Sometimes it takes a philosophic shape, and says, ‘I believe in such and such an one, therefore I am.’ It refuses even so much as to recognise its own identity save in the object of its affections. Dear me! all this is very silly, but so natural!

So, then, Harry and Edith walked home from St. Barnabas’ just a fortnight after they had first walked thither, and in that short time Love had worked all this havoc in their hearts.

‘I have had such a nice kind letter from Lady Charity,’ said Edith.

‘I know you have,’ said Harry, almost roughly; ‘and of course you mean to accept the invitation?’

Supposing Edith Price had not been in love with Harry Fortes-

cue, she would have been offended at a speech which was almost bearish in allowing her no choice of her own. Had she been fancy-free, unfettered, and independent, she would have asserted her dignity and gone down to Norfolk next morning. But we know that she was not free; she bowed before Harry, and looked on him in her heart already as her lord and master, and so she answered meekly,

‘I will do whatever you advise, Mr. Fortescue.’

‘If you will take my advice, Edith,’ said Harry, ‘you will stay in town.’

This he said quite carelessly, as though he were feeling the ground and wishing to see what Edith would say to the liberty. But Edith said nothing to it, she was too far gone already.

‘Your advice has always been best for us,’ said Edith, this time omitting the Mr. Fortescue.

‘Well then,’ said Harry, ‘I suppose we may consider it settled you will stay with Lady Charity. It will give us all time to think.’

‘It will,’ said Edith. ‘Mary and I will stay. How sorry dear Mrs. Nicholson will be to lose us!’

‘Every one would be sorry to lose you, Edith,’ said Harry.

See, he had called her Edith again, without any qualification—plain Edith, bare Edith, call it what you will; and Edith Price accepted it, and said nothing; but she looked full at Harry, and Harry Fortescue for the first time saw, from the joy in her eyes, that Edith Price was in love with him.

He left them at the door, having seen enough, and went home to Mrs. Boffin’s a happier man than he had ever felt in his life.

‘Why, this is life at last,’ he said. ‘If Edward Vernon feels at all like this, he must be happy.’

## CHAPTER LXXI.

### IN WHICH ALL FIND THEIR PLACES.

AND now our story has almost come to an end. Like the old year on December 31st, there is very little more life left in it. Of course, when Amicia came up to town, and found that Lady Charity, her best friend, had actually asked Edith Price, ‘the dark young lady in the background,’ to stay with her, she was furious. Lady Charity was a traitor, a renegade, a go-between, and what not. But you must remember that she could not say this to Lady Charity herself; and in nothing did Lady Charity more resemble the virtue from which she took her name than in caring nothing for what was said behind her back. Mrs. Crump indeed declared, as she brushed my lady’s hair, ‘that Lady Charity’s conduc’ was monstrous—to go and ‘arbour a young person like that was ‘orrible.’ But it really mattered very little what Mrs. Crump thought or said; and though Mrs. Grimalkin

held up her hands, or her paws, too, and said it was 'shameful, and against all the usages of society,' Lady Charity cared nothing for such gossip, for she had many more friends than Mrs. Grimalkin, and all her friends said her conduct was worthy of Charity itself.

But pray remember Amicia had an excuse. She really loved Harry Fortescue, and had set her heart, as we have seen, on having him. But if there is one lesson in life which many if not all of us must learn, it is this, that very often neither men nor women can marry those they love. And so Amicia Sweetapple had to live on and love on and bear the blow as she best could. All this happened only in 1870. You may see her about everywhere, as lovely as ever. She is still under thirty; and if any young man about or even under that age comes forward, and Amicia likes him as much as she liked—we will not now say 'loved'—Harry Fortescue, he may become the husband of a very lovely and charming widow with a large income all at her own disposal. But then he must not be so silly, or so wise, as to fall in love with an Edith Price, a mere governess, by the way.

What do we say to Florry Carlton? Very little. No words of ours can do her any good. To her the blow was much worse than to Amicia. She was tenderer at heart; not so passionate perhaps, for she was not near thirty, but with far deeper feelings and a less schooled mind. We pity her from the bottom of our hearts. But what can pity do in such a case? It rather adds insult to injury. Even the happiness of her sister, who was married the Christmas after to Edward Vernon, is an eyesore to her; it reminds her how happy she too might have been with Harry. Fortunately she has gone out little since those Ascot races. Perhaps she may recover; but she will always be one of what used to be called the broken hearts of society. In old times they were broken right in two, and people died of them; but now they can be healed, and some say they are stronger and softer for being broken. All that we know is, that as every set of china has several cracked plates, so every set in society has such broken hearts, not of women only, but of men. It is a mistake, too, to fancy that men's hearts are not just as brittle as women's; sometimes they are much brittler. But for all these poor things there are consolations and comforts—Time, Religion, Death. Let us leave Florry Carlton to one or all of these, and pass on. We think, whatever Amicia Sweetapple may do, Florence Carlton will never marry. Like a rose cankered in the bud, she will never bloom as a bride. You say, 'Never is a long day.' So it is. We shall see.

Let us pass on. You have heard nothing as yet of Harry Fortescue and Edith Price. All that remains to be said of them is, that Lady Charity was in possession of Edith's secret before she had stayed with her two days.

‘I am sure he does not know it,’ said Edith. ‘And then, I refused him.’

‘I am not so sure that he does not know it,’ said Lady Charity, to whom Harry had already told what he had guessed from Edith’s eyes.

Then, like a gossip, as charity often is, Lady Charity went and told Harry; and more than that, when Harry came she left them alone, and Harry stayed two hours, and Edith only thought it a quarter of an hour; and the day after he came, and as soon as he saw her he called her ‘dearest Edith’ all at one jump, and proposed, and was accepted. ‘Ah, but you have not told us half enough,’ some of you will say. Well, if you are so unreasonable and coarse-minded, and seek to pry into the mysteries of Love—for his rites are as mysterious and fortunately far more pure than those of Samothrace—you deserve to be struck blind, and must go to some other work of fiction than this. We tell you that within that week Harry and Edith were engaged to each other, and before the month was out they were married. Whether many clergymen assisted, or the service was ‘full choral,’ we cannot say; but we are sure there were no cards, and so that important fact was not put into the advertisement of the ceremony. Edith Price was married from Lady Charity’s house, and Mr. Beeswing gave the bride away. We should not wonder if, when old Lady Charity died, she left Mrs. Fortescue all her money. But what you will all of you wonder at, as we wonder at it as we write it, is this. The day before his marriage Harry Fortescue received a letter from Lord Pennyroyal, in which he simply said that he thought his noble conduct towards the Price family deserved some acknowledgment from those in a position to make it, and so he had sent Harry Fortescue a little present on his marriage. And what do you think it was? Why, a cheque on Lord Pennyroyal’s bankers for 10,000*l*. This you will all consider, we hope, very handsome; but before Harry could recover his surprise, which he had not done when he reached Lady Charity’s, he found Edith in equal astonishment. Lord Pennyroyal had sent her a little present too, which he said would enable her to maintain her independence, as well as pay for her dress, and that little something was another cheque for 10,000*l*. So you are all bound to apologise to Lord Pennyroyal, and to confess with Lady Pennyroyal—who knew him so much better—that though stingy in small matters, he was a man capable of great acts of generosity. We hope you will none of you think either Harry or Edith proud when we add that they returned both cheques to Lord Pennyroyal, expressing their grateful sense of his munificence, which at the same time they felt bound to decline. Since then Harry has been making his way at the ‘Bar’ in spite of the attorneys’ sons.

The Barkers are still the same loving couple; and the Marjorams



rival them in devotion to one another. Since that sudden conversion at Ascot, Mrs. Marjoram has never lapsed; she is too good a Calvinist for that. Mr. Beeswing is as genial and cheery as ever; and as for Count Pantouffles, what is there to be said of him, but that if you go any day into the Park between one and two or six and seven, you will see him bowing as exquisitely as ever? He at least knows what he is fit to do, and does it. And so we too make our bow to our gentle readers. If any one asks why some of our characters are left so happy, while others remain so wretched, all we can say is that the skein of life is tangled black and white; and as we have found life, so we paint it. When even Providence has not the power, but only the will, to make all men happy, how can a mere writer of fiction be so presumptuous as to dare to paint all clouds in rose-colour, and leave all his creatures happy?

The End.

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## TOM D'URFEY

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On the fifteenth day of June in the year of grace seventeen hundred and thirteen, there was a performance at the Drury-lane Theatre, one of the earliest *special* entertainments on record, for the benefit of that ingenious writer, Mr. Thomas D'Urfey. On this evening, in compliment to the poet, his own comedy of the *Plotting Sisters* was performed. By way of helping an old friend, and at the same time, no doubt, fired by a sort of prophetic impulse to set an example which should be followed hereafter by admiring posterity, Addison announced the performance a fortnight beforehand in the *Guardian*, and took the opportunity of adding a laudatory account of Mr. D'Urfey's merits and his claims to public support. We, who have this kind of puff done every day, or whenever the occasion offers, take little note of such announcements. But the thing was then new, and no doubt the paper in the *Guardian* materially aided in filling the house.

Poets, observes the essayist, are generally, as everybody has observed, longer-lived than the majority of mankind. Their length of days he supposes to be due to a peculiar redundancy of animal spirits: this administers more than the ordinary amount of fuel to life; so that its duration is prolonged beyond the common limits, save where—as in the unfortunate and well-known case of Anacreon, who was choked by a grape-stone, or that of Sappho, prematurely cut off at the age of sixty by a fall from the Leucadian promontory—some accident or excess abruptly terminates what would otherwise have proved a long career. He goes on to instance, as an example of this longevity, two bards who have gained immortal reputation by their lyrical effusions. The one, long before deposited in his funereal urn, is Pindar; the other, still happily breathing these upper airs, is Mr. Thomas D'Urfey.

Nothing can possibly be more nicely written, or in better taste, than Addison's puff, which follows this flourish of trumpets. He winds round the hat for his friend, the illustrious and never-to-be-forgotten Pindar of the age, with an air which makes the donor feel that he is receiving, not conferring, a favour by dropping his guinea to it. Doing violence to truth in the cause of friendship, he antedates his own age by some twenty years, so as to write with the advantage of seeming D'Urfey's contemporary. Thus he tells how, young and old insensibly together (Addison was at this time about forty,

while D'Urfev could not have been less than sixty), he and Tom delight in talking over bygone days, and divert themselves with 'the remembrance of several particulars that passed in the world before the greatest part of his readers were born.' He takes occasion to remark here, that after having written more odes than Horace and more plays than Terence, which was quite true,—and Addison shows great tact in comparing his man only *numerically* with Horace and Terence,—Tom finds himself (he mentions it quite casually, and as a thing almost too ridiculous to speak of in polite circles) actually importuned by a set of men, mean-spirited and grovelling Boeotians, to whom he owes money. These wretched creatures, after furnishing him for a number of years with the accommodations of life, refuse to be paid with a song. Could anything be more unreasonable? The poet, on the one hand, who has nothing but his portfolio of verses, though this is wealth, is ready to sing to butcher, baker, and grocer, in return only for that simple thing, a receipted account. It is a mere question of exchange and barter. He takes their wares and eats them up. They are welcome, by way of payment, to his, which have this additional advantage, that they cannot be eaten up, and are even expected by the original proprietor to last for ever. He is willing to trade away in small pieces, on loan, as it were, and not to be appropriated absolutely, the gorgeous monument, more lasting than brass, which he has erected to his own fame. He asks for nothing in return but wine, beer, beef, sugar. Like Harold Skimpole, the poet says to the world, 'Let me live; let me enjoy the sunshine—I ask no more. A little fruit and light claret and sunshine.' And yet these sordid men, these hucksters of things perishable, decline to accept any payment except gold and silver. Tom has none, and is in danger of being led off to the Fleet Prison, there to remain, in those days preceding the Bankruptcy Act, till some kind friend pay his debts, or he himself pays the debt of nature. Addison cannot very well pay his debts for him, but he can help him in other ways. He goes to the players, always the most generous tribe who ever sacrificed their labour and time for other people: they will play the comedy of the *Plotting Sisters*, and Addison calls on all the world to pay their money, and go to see it.

I am sorry to say that I have found no record of the success of the night; but no doubt, thanks more to Addison than to the merits of the piece, Drury-lane was full to overflowing, and the pockets of the poor poet were once more filled. 'My old friend,' says the essayist good-naturedly, 'ought not to pass the remainder of his life in a cage, like a singing bird, but enjoy all that pindaric liberty which is suitable for a man of his genius.' We know little enough about honest Tom; but we know that he did continue to enjoy his liberty, 'pindaric' or otherwise, and that he continued to sing and chirrup for ten years more, when he died after a good long lease of

sunshine and life. It was four years after Addison's death that D'Urfeŷ sang his last song and joined the majority.

It is singular, when we consider the boldness and uncompromising audacity of Addison's comparison of D'Urfeŷ with Pindar, to observe how completely posterity has forgotten all about him. He wrote operas which were never sung after his death; comedies which could not hold the stage; tragedies which I believe—for I have actually read one—never did or could please; congratulatory verses which of course no man living or dead ever did read; satires of which the edge is taken off and the point blunted; stories 'tragical, moral, and comical,' which are very very dreary; and songs—songs patriotic, humorous, erotic, and anacreontic—still to be read in his famous collection. As it is difficult to pick out his own from the rest, some of his making may yet survive, if only one could recognise them. He was a favourite of Charles the Second's, and Addison, in his assumed character of the old man, tells how he has seen the king more than once leaning on Tom's shoulder and humming over a song with him; he amused the town under James and William the Third; he amused the court of Queen Anne, and even the queen herself, the great Gloriana, as he calls her, by his ditties. Thus he used to sing himself to any patron willing and able to encourage him. His reputation as a wit was so great that it was a distinction to know him—'many an honest gentleman has got a reputation in his country by pretending to have been in company with Tom D'Urfeŷ.' He did good and true service to the crown and his country by songs which had at least the genuine ring of courage and loyalty. He was, we are told, the delight of any company from the time of Charles the Second to that of George the First; and yet the end of it all was that everybody agreed to forget him the moment the breath was out of his body; and when his biographer, less than thirty years after his death, wrote his life, he could find nothing to tell about him but the half dozen facts related, or rather referred to incidentally, by Addison. Had it not been for them, not a soul would have known that so great a reputation had existed and passed away with Tom d'Urfeŷ; no one would have known that he was the *delicice* of so many generations—these are but short-lived, and a long life sees many of them—of beaux and toasts. And this it is to be an immortal bard! For bays so perishable and laurels that withered so soon, Tom gave up the labours of a long and industrious life. He discounted his own glory, it is true, and had that enjoyment of fame in his lifetime which many a better bard only gets after death. It is something, even if you are put away on the shelves and forgotten as soon as the funeral-service has been read over you, to have been compared by Addison with Pindar, and honourably mentioned in the same sentence with Terence and Horace. Very few of his contemporaries were so fortunate, and most of them culti-

vated the divine art without meeting any such reward either in life or after it. It is thus that Tom had one immense advantage over his fellows: he made the world laugh, while they only made the world yawn. It is reasonable that we should love one who keeps us awake better than one who sends us to sleep; and, on the whole, our actors are more popular than our preachers. But it is doubtful whether Tom got much by 'going in' for glory. It is better, perhaps, to fall in with the work of the world, and make money out of it, than it is to live by amusing mankind. It seems to us obscure mortals a fine thing, *digito monstrari*, to have people looking at you as you go down the street; but it is not pleasant when you grow old, and find that you have missed your *coup*, after all, to have the hat sent round for you, and to be still as dependent on the smiles of fortune as when you first started. On the whole, it seems better to live with the greater number of mankind—to spend obscure years, plodding the weary way which leads to fortune, tolerably safe on getting at your journey's end; of having a few years of holiday for a finale, in which to enjoy hard-gotten gains, dearly-bought position, and the admiration that attaches to success.

It was in the year 1627 or 1628, just before the siege of Rochelle by Cardinal Richelieu, that a certain Huguenot family, D'Ursey by name, emigrated from their native land and settled in England. They had the sense to perceive the near approach of disagreeable if not perilous days, and escaped in time from a place where affairs were managed with such a want of consideration for quiet people, to the tranquillity of an English country town. They chose Exeter for their residence: what their condition or rank in life originally was we have now no means of ascertaining. That they were of gentle blood is proved by the prefix of the *De*: that they belonged to the aristocracy of the robe may be gathered from the fact that their son, our Tom—who, for aught we know, may have had a dozen brothers, or may have been the only hope of the stock—was entered by his parents at one of the inns of court as a law-student. It was the prudent design of the paternal D'Ursey that his son, after walking soberly through the academic groves of the Temple, should patiently climb the tree of legal labour, until, in fulness of time, he might arrive at those mighty rewards and dignities which England has ever held out to her successful lawyers. Tom probably entered about the year 1665. It was not long since the commencement of that glorious fling, which lasted for nearly twenty years, in which the country made amends for its ten years of soberness and sermons, and abandoned itself to a round of merriment, feasting, and ungodly mirth; enjoyments tempered only by the general recklessness of human life, by impecuniosity, by woman's infidelity, by man's dishonour, and by the occasional disasters arising out of drinking, card-playing, dicing, and keeping it up.



But Tom was young; and you may as well expect snow in summer as wisdom in youth. Moreover, he had gifts and talents. He had a sweet voice, a fine musical ear, skill to touch some sort of instrument, though we know not which, and a wonderful facility in writing verses. He left the courts of law, and betook himself to the cultivation of the Muses; no doubt against the wishes of his people, and encouraged by the fine promises of patrons. Songs he wrote all his life; setting them to old English tunes, to Italian airs, to French airs, and singing them himself, by way of introducing them. It was at that time with English writers, much as it is now in France, and soon will be in England. As soon as a man felt the divine afflatus, or as soon as he had persuaded any 'organ,' however humble, that he had it, he immediately conceived the most burning desire *faire du théâtre*—to write for the stage. Because a song, an essay, a set of congratulatory verses, a story, had succeeded, the author persuaded himself that he had the dramatic faculty. Useless to try and point out that to write for the stage demands powers very widely different from those required to write for the library; it was the fashion of the day, and it was the surest and readiest way to fortune and fame.

Tom D'Urfey, of course, became a playwright. His list of plays, ranging over a period of forty-six years, from the year 1675 to 1721, embraces comedies, operas, and tragedies. They do not seem to have met with more than an ephemeral success, and, indeed, have all the faults of the period, with few of its merits and beauties. Compared with Congreve and Farquhar, they are as a daub beside a picture; such merit as they have is that also conspicuous in his songs—an inextinguishable gaiety, which probably carried the play along while the actors were able to keep the spirit of the thing alive; while their coarseness is worse than anything in those dramatists, contemporaries of his own, whom Charles Lamb defended, and Macaulay abused.

Of D'Urfey's personal habits and peculiarities we know absolutely nothing, except that he was a great angler. 'I must not omit to mention,' says Addison, 'that my old friend angles for a trout the best of any man in England. May-flies come in late this season, or I should myself before now have had a trout of his catching.' And the honest poet sings himself,

'Of all the world's enjoyments  
That ever valued were,  
There's none of our employments  
With fishing may compare.'

That he sang his own verses, and sang them well, we learn not only from Addison, but also from himself, for he indited what he is pleased to call a 'Satyr' on the text of Horace's Third Satire:

' Omnibus hoc vitium est cantoribus, inter amicos  
 Ut nunquam inducant animum cantare rogati,  
 Injussi nunquam desistant.'

Horace goes on to quote the case of Tigellius the Sardinian, who had this fault. D'UrfeY complains of the continual application of this confounded Tigellius to his own case. If he refuses to sing, of course the words are hurled at him,

' Cæsar, qui cogere posset,  
 Si peteret per amicitiam patris atque suam, non  
 Quidquam proficeret.'

If, on the other hand, he sings when he is asked, and as often as he is asked, the same Tigellius serves as another admonition :

' Si collibuisse, ab ovo  
 Usque ad mala iteraret.'

So that whatever he did, whether he sang or was silent, he was always 'faced' by Horace with his awful example, and can see no other way to account for the malignity with which Tigellius and his followers are held up to ridicule, whatever line they adopt, than the supposition of personal animosity. *Tigellius could sing; Horace could not.* The idea is ingenious, but clumsily worked out.

The adulation and abject humility with which poets of the day approached their patrons were not, I believe, entirely hypocritical and assumed. They had for their patrons the same sort of respect which men have now for the institution which gives them means of living, or a road to fame. By his patron the poet not only lived from day to day, but got pensions, sinecures, posts of honour. When a patron died, he mourned not only the statesman but the protector: the discrimination which led the nobleman to observe and reward his own abilities was a mark of his superior intellect, and led the bard quite honestly to exaggerate his patron's importance in other respects; even to cry, as D'UrfeY did when the Duke of Portland died, with more feeling than poetic taste,

' Britain might well expect the sea to roar,  
 And rage with tempests seldom known before.'

D'UrfeY is strongest, however, when he is lamenting the death of one sovereign or celebrating the accession of the next. When Queen Anne died, he tells England that the sins of the country are justly punished; it is solely on account of them that

' Your queen, your earthly goddess here below,  
 Whose smiles, like the bright ruler of the day,  
 Made all things flourish, all things gay,—  
 Your Gloriana, whom ye so adore,  
 Ah! wretched beyond thought, shall bless your eyes no more.'

To be pindaric in Tom's eyes, it was only necessary to cut up the

es into unequal lengths, and always end with an Alexandrine. Previously, on the demise of William the Third, the poet had adopted a somewhat different treatment. The Muses, on this occasion unable themselves to celebrate grief so profound, call upon Apollo, and solemnly invite him to sing for them. Apollo is compelled, greatly to his own regret, to decline—like the American card swearer, he feels that he cannot do justice to the subject. His powers are not equal to it; and great Nassau remains unsung, lamented. Fustian rubbish, if you like; but it was the fashion, and Tom was certainly better than most of them.

'He could not have been a wholly bad man, because he loved his mother.' I quote this sentence from a good many different papers and articles, partly because it is applicable to Tom, who wrote an ode 'To my dear Mother,' and partly in order to protest against its exceeding nonsense. To begin with, setting aside that vest stratum of humanity, which is too miserable, hungry, ragged, and dirty, to have any natural affection left at all, every man does love his mother, and nobody is wholly bad. Tom was a rake, and wrote licentious plays and poems; this did not prevent him from cherishing the memory of the French lady, his mother, who lived away down at Exeter. His ode, to use a rough method of criticism, may be described as not so good as Cowper's. Nor did the freedom of his manners prevent him from paraphrasing one of the psalms. He calls this single effort of his in the cause of religion 'a divine Poem, from the Prose (!) of that excellent and majestic prophet and Poet, King David.' It was well meant; but the candid critic must confess that religion was little benefited by its appearance. And it was his only effort in this direction.

The reputation of this wit and poet, such as it was, must, however, be based upon his collection of songs called 'Pills to purge melancholy,' including not only his own verses, but a collection of others, together with airs of his own setting or making. As for the cure of the pills, it will be sufficient to hint that they are compounded of drugs which the faculty, such as Dr. Punch, whose special work it is to cure this disease of melancholy, have long since ceased to abandon. It is very curious to reflect that Addison—that veiled and gentle moralist, whose humour is of the gray and saddened kind, whose mind seemed instinctively to dwell only on the great and delicate subjects—should have been delighted, apparently, with the taking of this medicine. It is true that he does not mention the subject of the verses, and confines himself to their ingenuity and vivacity. 'The poet has enriched the world with a multitude of rhymes, and brought words together that without his good offices would never have been acquainted with one another.' And then he goes on to say, that if only those whom we meet in the streets would attend the play on Tom's benefit-night, there would

be a goodly audience. Goodly indeed ! In the pit would be Gillian of Croydon, Peg of Windsor, those young ladies who met their lovers at the sheep-shearing ; Jenny, and Dolly, and Molly ; Joan, and Dick, and Nell ; with the lass of Lynn, looking for her faithless lover. In the gallery there are Jockey and his Scottish lass ; Shenkin ; the Oyster Man and the Jolly Tinker ; Colin and the Dairy-maid ; and that young rascal Roger, ogling all the girls. In the dress-circle and boxes are Celia, Phillis, Lucinda, Chloris, Sylvia, and Corinna, with Damon, Coryon, Sir Eglamour, and indeed the finest company in the world, all whispering and laughing, and taking no manner of notice of the performance. In the royal box there is of course great Cæsar, half-a-dozen great Cæsars, for each of whom, in turn, England's heart has bled. Surely here is a house well filled.

It would be hardly fair, after talking so much about Tom's performances, were we not to give a specimen of them. Let us take a few, 'selected,' like the tobacconist's cigars, to show how he achieved popularity. The following is given to show his ease and facility of verse. The words go tripping along as pleasantly as any of those written later on by that other tuneful Tom, the late lamented Mr. Moore.

' Cold and raw the north did blow  
 Bleak in the morning early,  
 All the trees were hid in snow,  
 Daggled by winter yearly ;  
 When come riding over a know  
 I met with a farmer's daughter :  
 Rosy cheeks and bonny brow,  
 Good faith ! made my mouth to water.

Down I vailed my bonnet low,  
 Meaning to show my breeding ;  
 She return'd with a graceful bow,  
 A village far exceeding.  
 I asked her where she went so soon,  
 And long'd to begin a parley :  
 She told me to the next market-town,  
 A-purpose to sell her barley.'

The above is in his rural or amatory-pastoral style. The next is a drinking song, 'in praise of wine,' as the old Latin collections used to have it.

' When I visit proud Celia just come from my glass,  
 She tells me I'm fluster'd and look like an ass ;  
 When I mean of my passion to put her in mind,  
 She bids me leave drinking, or she'll never be kind.  
 That she's charming and handsome I very well know ;  
 And so is my bottle—each brimmer's so too :  
 And to leave my soul's joy—O ! 'tis nonsense to ask ;  
 Let her go to the devil—to the devil—Bring t'other half flask.

Had she tax'd me with gaming, and bid me forbear,  
 'Tis a thousand to one I had lent her an ear ;  
 Had she found out my Chloris up three pairs of stairs,  
 I had balk'd her, and gone to St. James's to prayers ;  
 Had she bade me read homilies three times a day,  
 She perhaps had been humour'd with little to say.  
 But at night to deny me my flask of dear red :  
 Let her go to the devil—to the devil—there's no more to be said.'

Here is Tom in a sentimental humour, perhaps not at his best, but fairly good :

' In old Italian prose we read,  
 A youth, by riot and fond love undone,  
 Had yet a falcon left of famous breed,  
 His chief diversion in his fatal need,  
 And sole companion when he left the town.  
 The saint that did his soul possess,  
 Touch'd with a generous sense of his distress,  
 Made him a visit at his poor retreat,  
 Where his heart nobly feasted ; but, alas !  
 His empty purse could get  
 Nothing was good enough for her to eat,  
 Till rack'd with shame and a long fruitless search,  
 He, more to make his love appear,  
 His darling hawk snatch'd from the perch,  
 And dress'd it for his dear.  
 Which generous act did so entirely gain her,  
 She gave him all her love and wealth,  
 And nobly paid her entertainer.  
 So, when my love with fatal strife  
 Had spent its whole estate,  
 And nature's short-winged hawk, my life,  
 Was doom'd a dish for fate ;  
 Divine Olympia changed the sad decree,  
 And with infallible divinity  
 Gave a new being to my soul and me.'

One more, and I have done. The secret of Tom's success was his inextinguishable gaiety and lightness of heart. He was always young, always bubbling with laughter, and creaming with jokes ; like a bottle of champagne frothing to the last, Tom preserved his mirth long after the shadows of life's waning were upon him, and until the end itself came. What a jolly old man must he have been who could write the following when seventy years had already passed over his own head !

' The famous old prophet who thirty years toil'd  
 To write us the Psalms that Dan Hopkins hath spoil'd,  
 In giving account of the ages of men,  
 Has strangely confined us to threescore and ten,  
 And tells us, to scare us, his last hour is near  
 Who enters the sad climacterical year.

Then well fare the man who, inspired by good wine,  
 Cares neither for seventy nor seven times nine ;



Whose jolly brisk humour adds sands to his glass ;  
 Who, standing upright, can look fate in the face ;  
 Who makes much of life ; and when nature is due,  
 Declines like a flower, as sweet as it grew !

Tom D'Urfey himself declined like a flower 'as sweet as he grew,' and went out of the world at a green old age, singing to the last, as Addison had prophesied of him.

It is the fate of those wits whose stock-in-trade is simple mirth, with good-will and kindness, to be forgotten when they die. They are like those bright and generous wines which exhilarate us at night, and are forgotten in the morning. It is your ill-natured wit—the man who invents a thousand different ways of telling a man he is an ass, who finds out the tender places of human nature and sticks pins into them—he it is who lives in men's memory, like the wine which gives you a headache and hot coppers in the morning. In Tom D'Urfey's nature there was not an ounce of malice ; little as we know of him, there is yet enough to justify, amply and entirely, Addison's recommendation, that the world could not possibly do kindness to a more diverting companion, to a more cheerful, honest, and good-natured man. With lower aims and lower ideas, he was the Hood of his period. It is well for our age, that modern humorists have discovered the art of promoting laughter by the employment of drugs less noxious than those with which poor Tom was fain to compound his 'Pills.' And after all, as we need not take this medicine of his, and there is no fear that it will ever be prescribed to melancholy boys and girls, it really doesn't matter any longer.

WALTER BESANT, M.A.

# BELGRAVIA

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OCTOBER 1872

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## TO THE BITTER END

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

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### CHAPTER XXXIV. 'BUT DEAD THAT OTHER WAY.'

WESTON VALLORY, by an undeviating persistence in the habits of industry, had brought himself to such a high state of training, that it was impossible for him to be idle. At his box at the races, the neatest and daintiest of bachelor boxes, Weston rose with a knock and was out and about before the milkman. Woe be to the maid and the cook if Mr. Vallory's morning cup of strong tea was not on the little table by his bed-side at half-past five in the summer and six in the winter! Woe be to the gardener if his master, in his constitutional, found a weed perking its shameless head amidst the pelia or verbenas in the ribbon bordering, or if the iron roller was not at work betimes upon the gravel, or if the miniature crown was not close-cropped as the hair of a convict's head! Like clock-work were the arrangements of Weston's modest household. He would give little dinners that were perfection, with his two servants and a brace of men with trays, who ran down express from the city, and gave the finishing touch to their dishes in the tiny Norwichester kitchen. Weston could get twice as much work out of his servants as any common master, by reason of his own unflinching in-

'never ask you for anything at unreasonable hours,' he said; 'nor keep you up late at night;' and indeed his latch-key would have rendered this a useless tyranny, as well as an inconvenient one; for people, besides Mr. Weston Vallory himself, were acquainted with the hour of his return. The servants rarely heard him go up to his room, but at half-past six in the morning he was walking in the garden, fresh and blooming as his standard roses.

'I can do with very little sleep,' he said, in his moments of conversation. 'Indeed, I consider the habit of going to bed every night

an absurd conventionality. In the age of iron, depend upon it, there was no such custom. Do you suppose Julius Cæsar or William the Conqueror called for his chamber-candle every night, and shuffled off to bed like a retired tallow-chandler? There never would have been any stir in the world, if the leaders of men had wasted half their time in sleep in our jog-trot fashion.'

A medical friend of Mr. Vallory's, who heard these remarks, ventured to suggest that our lunatic asylums would be more thickly peopled if sleep went out of fashion.

'Very possibly,' replied Weston, with his careless air; 'I dare say there might be a run upon the madhouses. You see the question depends very much upon the stuff a man is made of. Take Napoleon the First as an example. He was content with four hours' sleep, and yet he kept himself sane under circumstances which would have sent most men off their heads.'

Weston Vallory, perhaps considering that he was made of Napoleonic stuff, rarely indulged himself with more than four hours of that placid slumber which is apt to bless the pillow of a man who is thoroughly satisfied with himself and his own line of life. Thus it was that at Clevedon, after leaving the smoking-room among the last of the night birds, Mr. Vallory generally made his morning toilet to the earliest music of the thrushes and blackbirds on the lawn under his window. Other guests, who would be early enough a week or two hence, turned their faces to the wall, and pleaded against the stern sense of duty for a little more sleep and a little more slumber. He was in the garden among the rain-beaten roses and passion-flowers when the stable-clock struck six, on the morning after that day of hopeless downpour which had sorely afflicted the butterfly guests at Clevedon—a peerless summer morning, with a cloudless blue sky and the balmiest air that ever fluttered the roses. If he had been a lover of nature in a Wordsworthian sense, he would have yielded himself up to the soft intoxication of the hour—would have drained to the last drop the enchanted cup of a vague delight. If he had been a painter, he might have revelled in a feast of form and colour—might have composed any number of graceful pictures, with fair figures of his own imagining in the foreground, and those long walks and stiff yew-hedges and ancient flower-borders for background and framework. If he had been a pre-Raphaelite, there was enough in every single dew-laden rose-bush; in every cluster of tall lilies lifting up their slender stems amongst tangled masses of carnation or periwinkle; even in the time-worn sundial, gray and grim and stony and moss-grown, amidst the flaunting young hollyhocks, flaming crimson and yellow, to hold him spell-bound, idly gazing. But as he happened to be none of these things, his only impression was of a garden carelessly kept, and of Sir Francis Clevedon's weakness of mind in allowing his work to be done so badly.

Not long did the garden suffice to employ his active mind. He was not a student of velvet-rose petals begemmed with dew. He smoked his 'Cavajal;' took a thoughtful walk under the rose-laden arches, and then departed by a little wicket opening into the park.

'I shall have time to reconnoitre this mysterious Brierwood before breakfast,' he said to himself. 'I wonder how our friend Harcross likes the notion of my being down here. He ought to know that, if there is any little secret history attached to his experiences in this part of the country, I am just the kind of man to hunt up the details. How ridiculously fond Augusta is of him! Not because he is handsomer, or better, or cleverer than other men. I verily believe it is simply because he does not care a straw about her. There was profound truth in that remark of somebody's: "The only way of making love nowadays is to take not the slightest notice of the lady."'

He walked through that wilder part of the park, where the Spanish chestnuts rose like leafy towers towards the summer sky, by the way that Hubert Walgrave and Grace Redmayne had taken in the sunset when they met with the viper. For him that wild forest verdure had no peculiar charm — was, indeed, no more lovely than a trim public garden fresh from the hands of some modern Capability Brown. Yet he did not walk with his eyes cast down, as one whose outward vision is in abeyance, while sordid speculations fill his soul. He looked about him and perceived that everything was very green and blue and sunny, like Kensington Gardens run wild, and shifted beyond the odour of London smoke.

'A fine old place!' he thought; 'a man who keeps it in no better order than this hardly deserves to have it.'

The south lodge was better tenanted and more smartly appointed than it had been on that summer day when Grace and her lover entered this sylvan scene by the dilapidated oaken gate. The little gothic dwelling-place had been patched up, scarlet geraniums were trained against the newly-pointed brickwork. There were no broken windows now, as there had been in those days of poverty and neglect, but shining lattices, with crisp muslin curtains behind them, and in one special window a basket of blue-and-yellow beadwork, with a canary hanging in a brass cage above it.

'Woman's work, evidently,' thought Mr. Vallory; and he was in no wise astonished when the little gothic door opened with a sudden bounce, and a damsel tripped out with the key of the gate.

She was the daughter of the head gardener, and a somewhat distinguished young person in her particular walk of life. She was, by common consent, allowed to be the prettiest girl in the three villages of Rayton, Hubbleford, and Kingsbury, and the most consummate flirt. At twenty-three she had broken more hearts than she cared to count, and was now busily engaged in demolishing a very

honest one, in the possession of Joseph Flood, Sir Francis Clevedon's own groom, her recognised and legitimate adorer, a young man who had money in the savings-bank, and a praiseworthy yearning to begin life as a grocer and confectioner, with a dash of ready-made boots and shoes, and perhaps a sprinkling of linendrapery, in the village of Rayton, a little fringe of houses and tiny shops on the high-road near Clevedon Park, which was familiarly known to the Cleveland retainers as 'up-street.'

As Jane Bond came tripping across the tiny lodge garden this morning, serenely conscious of a well-starched and well-fitting cotton gown, Weston Vallory thought that he had never seen a prettier woman. He was not a man of ultra-refined taste in the matter of feminine beauty. This florid full-flavoured style, this shining black hair, these black eyes, rosy cheeks, and ripe red lips, realised his highest notions upon the subject. His archetypal woman would have been no lovelier than Jane Bond, whose features were regular although commonplace, and whose bold black eyes were set off by a peerless complexion of the rustic brunette order.

He went towards the gate quite silently, struck dumb for the moment by admiration, but not for long. His agreeable cockney breeding quickly reasserted itself, with that gracious ease of manner which was wont to distinguish him.

'Do many people come to Clevedon this way?' he asked, surveying the girl with a look of somewhat audacious admiration.

'Not very many, sir,' Miss Bond answered with a careless shrug, not at all disconcerted by that undisguised homage. 'It's awful dull.'

'Then I'm sure they can't know what a pretty girl there is to open the gate,' said Weston, 'or they'd come by this lodge if it was a mile out of their way. The men, I mean, of course; the women would hardly like to be reminded of their own ugliness by such a contrast.'

This was the sort of thing which suited Miss Bond, and to which she was tolerably accustomed. She was able to retort upon Mr. Vallory with an impudent readiness which was apt to pass for wit among her admirers—to give him as good as he brought, as she said afterwards when she described the little scene to the postman's daughter, her friend and confidante.

Her ready answers charmed Mr. Vallory, so, although on business intent, he dawdled a little in the early summer morning, to indulge in a kind of badinage which he had practised considerably with young ladies of the ballet-girl and barmaid class, and which he knew how to adapt to the simpler tastes of this rustic beauty. He wasted a quarter of an hour or so in this conversation, and by the end of that time was on quite a friendly footing with the damsel. She had informed him that her father was a Primitive Methodist, a member



of the flock led by a certain Joshua Bogg, an enlightened tailor, whose temple was at Hubbleford, and that he was very strict and stern with her. She had told him what a dull life she had at the south lodge, and how much she had preferred living up-street in Rayton, where she and her father had abode until Sir Francis came to Clevedon, though their dwelling there had been less convenient, and they had had no garden.

'There was always some one to speak to at Rayton,' she said, 'if it was only old women and children. But here there's no one.'

'Isn't there, now?' said Weston. 'Why, I should have thought people would come any distance to talk to such a girl as you—a girl who is as clever as she's handsome.'

'Ah, there's plenty of that kind,' replied Miss Bond, with a little supercilious toss of her head; 'plenty that would come and hang about the place, if I'd let 'em, and get me into disgrace with father, and set people talking. But I don't want that kind of thing; I never have encouraged it, though they do call me a flirt.'

'O, they do call you a flirt!' said Weston. 'But, my dear girl, you are a great deal too clever not to know that slander is a kind of tribute which the world pays to superior merit. If you were not the prettiest girl within twenty miles, no one would trouble himself—or herself, for it is generally herself who is troubled about such matters—by remarking your flirtations. There are women who would give the world to lose their reputation in the same way.'

Miss Bond did not dispute the wisdom of these remarks. 'It don't much matter to me, any way,' she said, 'except when it sets father scolding, and ding-donging the Scriptures at me, as if I was the daughter of Sion, or as if I ever sat upon seven hills. Howsomever, I shall be out of it all soon, that's one comfort, and out of this dull hole, and living in Rayton.'

This was said with a tone and a simper which were quite enough for Mr. Vallory's enlightenment.

'You mean that you are going to be married?' he said.

'Yes, I suppose so, before very long. I've been a long time making up my mind, but I've been bothered into making it up at last. I'm going to settle.'

'Settle!' cried Weston. 'What an odious word, miserably expressive of an odious fact! Such a beauteous butterfly as you should never "settle" upon one flower, while all the gardens of earth lie before you. Settle! Make an end of all the uncertainties of life, and tie yourself down to a cottage at Rayton. If you only knew your own value, my dear Miss Bond, you would not dream of such a sacrifice. Settle! Why, a woman with your advantages should never dream of marrying on the right side of thirty. How can a woman tell what her chances may be till she has come to the meridian of her beauty? At eighteen she may be engaged to a gardener,

and at eight-and-twenty she may find herself a duchess. But perhaps you don't know the history of the slave girl, who married the great Russian emperor; and possibly you may never have heard of the famous Polly who became Duchess of Bolton, and who never was your equal in good looks.'

'I suppose you know this young woman you call Polly?' said Miss Bond curiously. She was not at all disinclined to listen to this kind of talk. It opened dazzling vistas of thought, a vague glittering vision of a possible future. She had dreamed her ambitious dreams, even in the lonely south lodge; but the wildest imaginings that could arise spontaneously in her untutored brain had been small and sordid, in comparison with such ideas as were conjured up by the suggestions of Weston Vallery.

'No,' he said with his supercilious grin, 'I had not the honour of knowing Polly. She was before my time. But I have seen her portrait by Hogarth—a sallow sharp-featured beauty, in a mob cap, acting Polly Peacham between two rows of fine gentlemen seated at the side scenes. You are a hundred times handsomer than Polly.'

He looked at his watch. This rustic philandering was pleasant enough, but at the best it was a waste of time, and Weston Vallery's industrious habits had made waste of time almost impossible to him. He had business to get through that morning before breakfast.

'You know Brierwood Farm, of course, Miss Bond?' he said.

The girl stared at him wonderingly. This sudden transition from a florid compliment to a commonplace question took her a little by surprise.

'Lor, yes, I know Brierwood well enough—Farmer Redmayne's.'

'Redmayne—yes, I think that is the name. But the Redmayne race have migrated, have they not? They have all gone to Australia, I hear.'

'Gone and come back,' Miss Bond answered carelessly, twirling her big key with a somewhat offended air. She did not quite relish this unceremonious cutting short of the talk about her own beauty and possible offers of marriage from dukes.

'Come back?'

'Yes; Mr. Redmayne—Richard Redmayne, O, come back this ever so long—before the hay was carted, about the time Sir Francis was married. And they do say he's changed so that those who knew him best five years ago would hardly know him now.'

'And what has changed him in such a remarkable manner?' asked Weston, with eager interest.

'Troubles,' answered Miss Bond, shaking her head solemnly.

'What kind of troubles?—money troubles?'

'O, dear, no. Folks say he found no end of gold in Australia, and that he could buy Clovedon off Sir Francis, if he chose. It isn't

want of money makes him so gloomy. I met him on Kingsbury Common one evening, just as it was growing dark, close upon a month ago—they say he never goes out in the daytime—and I'm sure I was almost frightened at his dark angry-looking face. I shouldn't have known him, for I remember him such a good-looking free-spoken man; and I wished him good-evening, but he never answered a word, or gave me so much as a civil nod—only stared at me in a wild kind of way as if I'd been a mile off.'

'A bad account, Miss Bond. I fear this Mr. Redmayne must be in a bad way. But what can be the cause of it? If not money troubles, what kind of troubles?'

'You're a stranger here, or you'd know pretty well as much as I do,' answered Miss Bond, still twirling her key, but with a gossip's growing interest in the discussion of other people's business; 'yet you spoke just now as if you knew all about Brierwood and Mr. Redmayne.'

'Yes, yes, I know a good deal about him, but not all his family affairs,' said Weston rather impatiently. 'How about this trouble—what was it?'

'His daughter,' answered the girl tersely.

'His daughter?'

'Yes, an only daughter, which he doated on the very ground he walked upon; and while he was away in Australia, she died.'

'Hard lines,' said Weston, in his practical way, 'but a fate to which all men's daughters are more or less liable. Is that all?'

'She died,' repeated Jane Bond, with wide solemn eyes—'died awful sudden!'

'Made away with herself?' inquired Weston, with keener interest.

'No, I don't suppose it was quite as bad as that, though nobody knows of can say for certain. The Redmaynes have been so uncommon close about it. She went away—'

'O, she died away from home, then?'

'Yes, went away, and no one ever heard where she went or why she went, and no one heard for ever so long after that she was dead, and no one ever heard where she died, or who she was with when she died. It was nobody's business, of course, but her father's and her friends'; but still people will talk, you know, and when other people are not free-spoken and above-board, it makes one think there's something in the background.'

'Something in the background!' repeated Weston; 'no doubt there was something in the background. A lover, for instance. Did you ever hear of any lover?'

'Never. There wasn't a quieter girl than Miss Redmayne; she went to school at the Wells, and was brought up quite the lady. No, I never heard of any one. There was a gentleman lodged there, I

believe, the summer before Miss Redmayne died, but I never heard a word about him and her.'

'Do you remember the gentleman's name?'

'No. I heard it at the time, I daresay, but if I did, I've clean forgotten it.'

'Did you ever see him?'

'Never.'

'Humph,' muttered Weston thoughtfully, 'and the girl died away from home. But you don't know where?'

'Not for certain. I fancy I've heard say she went to London, but Mrs. James Redmayne—that's Richard Redmayne's brother's wife—was always very snip-snappish about it.'

'Did they bring the daughter home to be buried?'

'O dear, no. She'd been dead ever so long before anybody knew anything about it except her own people, even if *they* knew.'

'How do you know that she really is dead?' said Weston in a speculative tone. 'She may have run away with some one—gone wrong, as you call it in the country—and her family might prefer to tell this story about her death rather than confess the truth.'

This suggestion of a small social mystery was not displeasing to Jane Bond. She shook her head and sighed with a solemn air that might mean anything.

'There's no knowing what may be at the bottom of it,' she said, after a pause. 'Miss Redmayne's mother died young, and died sudden, but still there's no knowing. I've heard say, from those that knew him well, that Richard Redmayne was always a proud man, though he was so free-spoken. And everybody knew how he loved his daughter. If anything went wrong with her, he'd be sure to take it deeply to heart.'

'Naturally, and would be likely to invent the story of her death in order to shield her. Depend upon it, Miss Redmayne is as much alive as you or I, and living very comfortably somewhere. In some snug little box St.-John's-wood way, very likely,' he added, to himself rather than to Miss Bond; 'I'd give a year's income to find her.'

He looked at his watch again, and this time wished Miss Bond good-morning. She opened the new iron gate, and he went through on to the dusty road. He had spent a good deal of his morning's leisure, but he had spent it profitably. It was hardly likely that any one would be able to tell him much more about the Redmayne household than he had just heard from Jane Bond.

'I knew there was something,' he said to himself as he walked along the road in a triumphant spirit; 'I could have wagered my existence there was something. I saw it in Harcross's face the evening after the wedding, when Augusta talked of Brierwood. He's an excellent actor, but he couldn't deceive me. And this was at the



bottom of his disinclination to come to Clevedon. *That* confirmed my idea. The girl died away from home—a very easy way of settling for her and making an end of the story. These country clodhoppers are as proud as Lucifer, and would tell any lie rather than bear the burden of disgrace. I wouldn't mind backing my own opinion that Miss Redmayne is comfortably hidden away in some quaint little retreat within the four-mile radius, and that Walgrave Harcross pays the rent and taxes; and if my idea is a sound one, it shall go hard with me if I don't unearth the lady.'

He walked on to Brierwood, surveyed the picturesque old farmhouse, peered in at the garden gate, stared at the windows, but could perceive no token of life within except the slender thread of smoke curling up from the chimney at the inferior end of the building. After the account he had just heard of Mr. Redmayne he was not at all inclined to beard that wounded lion in his den, so he found a humble roadside inn within about a quarter of a mile where he asked for a bottle of soda-water with a glass of sherry in it, and while sipping that compound and recognising that peculiar flavour of publican's sherry, which is at once hot and sweet and sour, he contrived to make a few inquiries about Mr. Redmayne and his belongings.

The innkeeper was less communicative than Miss Bond, and was evidently disinclined to talk about Richard Redmayne's troubles or Richard Redmayne's daughter.

'Yes, there was a daughter,' he said in answer to Weston's cross-questioning; 'and she died, and poor Redmayne took it to heart, and has never been the same man since. He went to Australia, and made money at the diggings, and bought a farm out there, and sent his brother's family over to work it for him; and he's let off his land here, and does nothing all day but sit in the garden and smoke, I'm told. All I know is, that he never comes nigh me, and he used to drop in pretty often in a friendly way, though he was never a drinking man.'

That was about as much as Mr. Vallory could obtain for the price of his undrinkable soda-and-sherry; but so far as it went, it served to confirm the story Jane Bond had told him. He turned his face homewards, refreshed in body and mind by his healthy morning walk and the crumbs of information gathered on the road, and his bosom filled with that serene consciousness of having improved the shining hour which may be supposed to have cheered and sustained the busy bee.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

'THINK YOU, I AM NO STRONGER THAN MY SEX?'

CLEVEDON HALL and Clevedon Chase lost all their pleasantness in the eyes of Mrs. Harcross after that confession of her husband's.



She was not a woman to envy the advantages of another, had never in her life felt so mean an anguish; but it did not the less seem to her that this noble old mansion and all its belongings should by right have been Hubert's, and that it was a bitter thing to see him a guest in the house where he ought to have been master. Since that revelation in the picture gallery, she had thought of nothing else, and it had been very difficult for her to contribute her quota to the common fund of liveliness and society talk. Weston's observant eye had detected the change, and he would have been very glad to know the nature of the disturbing influence. Had Augusta's suspicions been aroused by the circumstances that had awakened his? Did she begin to doubt her husband's entire devotion to herself? Was she in a temper in which it would be safe to hint his own doubts upon that subject? He did not forget the conversation at the dinner-table, on the first night at Clevedon, and how Augusta had risen in the might of her wifely affection, like the lioness who defends her young. Prudence was ever his guiding star, so he held his peace for a time, and looked about him.

'I don't want to be premature,' he said to himself. 'It would be a mistake to approach the subject till I've got a case. And if I keep quiet and look about me, I'm pretty sure to find out something more; and when I do drop down upon you, Mr. Walgrave Harcross, I mean the drop to be a crusher.'

What was his motive? A mixed one. In the first place, he never had forgiven, and he never meant to forgive, Hubert Harcross for having come between him and his cousin; and in the second place—perhaps he himself could hardly have given a clear statement of his secondary motive. He knew that he wanted—in his own words—to 'square accounts' with his rival, and he knew that, beyond that settlement in the immediate present, he had views for the future—views which he did not care to put into any definite shape just yet, but which were, nevertheless, interwoven with the whole scheme of his life. He had sown his wild oats, had made an end of the frivolities of youth, and could afford to concentrate all his thoughts and desires upon this one purpose.

The driving, and riding, and picnicking, and croquet-playing, and afternoon tea-drinking in the old-fashioned garden, went on just the same, after that one rainy day, and Mrs. Harcross performed her part in all these diversions, despite those corroding thoughts which were now ever present with her. She might have pleaded headache or fatigue, or long arrears of correspondence, and shut herself in her own room, there to brood over her misery unseen by human eyes, except the eyes of Tullion. But to do this, she argued with herself, would be to set people wondering; and, with that strange likeness between Sir Francis Clevedon and Hubert Harcross always before them, who could tell whether some observer, more acute than the

common herd, might not fathom that shameful secret? No, she would save the world, and defy suspicion, if, indeed, the secret were still safe—a question upon which she sometimes suffered excruciating doubts.

Had she no pity for her husband, the primary victim, who for no fault of his own stood thus divided from his fellow-men, with a cruel blot upon his name? She did pity him, but in so much less a degree than she pitied herself for having unwittingly linked herself with his dishonour, that her compassion had not much weight. She would not forgive him for having married her on false pretences, for having withheld a secret that would have unquestionably prevented her acceptance of him.

‘If I had loved him to distraction,’ she told herself, ‘I would have broken my heart rather than I would have married him, knowing what I know now.’

She felt angry with her father even for the carelessness which had exposed her to such a calamity.

‘To think of papa, a lawyer, with his wide experience, taking so many pains to find out my husband’s actual pedigree.’

Mrs. Harcross forgot the very resolute tone she had taken about this marriage, which had made Mr. Vallory somewhat diffident in the matter of interference or opposition. It seemed a hard thing that she, who was, as it were, the very nursing of the law, should have been thus cheated—that all the parchment and legal stationery of the offices of Harcross and Vallory could not save her from this degradation.

‘If I were quite sure that no one knew!’ she said to herself. But, then, how can I tell? How can I suppose that Lord Dartmouth kept his own counsel?’

The windows of her bedroom and dressing-room looked over the loveliest part of the park, and the prospect, which had been agreeable enough at first, now filled her with unspeakable bitterness. It was his, perhaps, Hubert’s; by right and justice his very own. Who could tell that there had not been a marriage, and a legal one? O, foolish wretched mother, to leave her son’s rights unasserted, undecided!

Even Georgina Clevedon suffered a little in Augusta’s estimation. She could not feel quite so fond of her as she had been before. She was always asking herself—‘Which is the interloper, she or I?’

Between the husband and wife there had been no farther quarrelling; only a terrible calm, like a dull dead sunless stillness upon a dark gray sea. Hubert Harcross was deeply wounded. Even in that loveless marriage, loveless at least on one side, there had been some shadow of bond. He had been grateful for his wife’s preference, had admired her and been proud of her; had even, in his better moods, looked forward to a day when years of peaceful association should have brought them a little closer together, should have developed

some mutual sympathies, some common thoughts and aspirations. But that was all over now. She had outraged his pride, stung him as he had never been stung before by man or woman. He shut her out of his heart. To the end of his existence she must remain a stranger to him, or something worse than a stranger—an enemy who had offended him beyond the possibility of forgiveness.

Augusta hardly realised the nature of the breach between them. Absorbed for the time in her own feelings, she had not yet attempted to analyse those of her husband. She could see that he was offended, but she took no trouble to conciliate him. It seemed, indeed, a hard thing that he should take umbrage at her natural indignation. He had cheated her, and was offended because she resented the wrong he had done. She was one of those people who can sustain this kind of silent warfare, and who are never the first to hang out the flag of truce. So long as the proprieties were not outraged, she was content. Before the eyes of the world, Mr. Harcross was still polite and attentive to his wife. In the seclusion of their own rooms, they scarcely spoke to each other.

While these who had once sworn eternal love and obedience were thus dragging a lengthening chain, Georgie Clevedon was tasting all the sweets of early married life; that balmy spring-time of existence in which the days are all sunshine and soft west wind, and all the trees of the garden in blossom; that glimpse of Eden and man before the fall.

'We have been married more than three months, and have not quarrelled yet, Frank,' she said to her husband one morning, in a little burst of child-like happiness. 'Do you think we ever *could* quarrel?'

'Of course not, darling. Can a man quarrel with the better part of himself, the brighter half of his own nature?'

'Yet one hears so often of domestic unhappiness,' said Georgie with a sudden thoughtfulness; 'and I suppose people always begin by loving each other as well as you and I do. I mean to say that mercenary marriages, or marriages of convenience, must be the exception, and not the rule. And yet so few people seem really happy, as you and I are. There are the Harcrosses, for instance: that *must* have been a love-match, for Augusta had a fortune, and Mr. Harcross hadn't; so on her side at least it must have been a love-match. But they seem such an uncomfortable couple; very polite to each other, and so on, but seeming to live only for the world.'

'Why, you wouldn't have them billing and cooing in our style, Georgie!' cried Sir Francis, laughing. 'It's a long time since their honeymoon, remember; and then you can hardly expect a popular barrister to go in for that sort of thing. He has too much sentiment in his breach-of-promise cases. Besides, Harcross, though a very good fellow, seems of rather too hard a composition for a lover. I couldn't imagine Harcross in love.'

‘Don’t say that, Frank, when people say he’s like you.’

‘Physically, perhaps. But you see we are not obliged to resemble each other morally. He is a man who worships success, Georgie; no woman need expect to stand for much in the life of such a man. His wife must be satisfied if he wins her a title some day.’

‘I daresay Augusta would think more of that,’ said Georgie. ‘I like her very much, you know; but I can’t help seeing that she is rather worldly.’

Of course this devoted young couple could not have much time for themselves while their house was full of company. They were obliged to be perpetually planning new diversions, fresh drives, and rides, and ruins, and show-houses for their friends; to be continually on the watch to prevent the demon of dullness stealing into the circle. They succeeded very well in the performance of these duties, and though they often told each other in confidence that Clevedon was much nicer when they had it all to themselves, and that they should be glad when the people were gone, they contrived nevertheless to enjoy life, and to bring very gay spirits to every fresh amusement. To Georgie all the importance and grandeur of her position as châteline seemed very much like playing at keeping house. It was so new to reign over a larger kingdom than that in which Pedro the monkey, and Tufto the deerhound, and Kitmutgar the bull-terrier, and Sicee the pug, were her chief subjects; so new to have servants who would scarcely lift their eyes to behold her countenance, instead of the fat familiar cook with whom her father had been wont to hold long conversations, of a culinary nature, through the kitchen window.

‘I feel myself such an impostor, Franky,’ she said to her husband, ‘when Mrs. Mixer asks me if I have any alteration to make in the bill of fare, and I can only think of papa’s favourite dishes—fried prawns, and devilled kidneys, and mulligatawny soup.’

The great event of the year was to be the fête on Sir Francis Clevedon’s birthday. The whole affair had been Georgie’s scheme from first to last, and Sir Francis had been not a little reluctant to be made an object of interest in the eyes of his tenantry.

‘It seems so absurd, Georgie,’ he had remonstrated, more than once, ‘for a man of nine-and-twenty to keep his birthday.’

‘Nonsense, Frank! Didn’t George the Third have a jubilee when he was ever so old? And this is to be your first birthday at Clevedon. It is your coming of age, in fact; for you never did come of age, or only in a sneaking way at Bruges, or some other horrid Flemish town, where all the streets smell of garlic. If you don’t want to keep your birthday, I shall begin to think you are not at all what you married me, and that you are afraid to show your tenants the sort of wife you have chosen.’

Of course the lady had her own way, and, having once secured



her husband's consent to the business, did not rest till she had obtained *carte blanche* as to details. Then did Colonel Davenant arise in his glory. He drove over to Clevedon every morning to breakfast, and from morn till dewy eve he and his daughter were more or less occupied with mysterious consultations and discussions about the fête. Strange men came down from town to take orders about lamps and marquees, and temporary fountains which were to gush forth in the midst of roses. Other strange men hung about the park with a view to fireworks.

Sir Francis shivered as he thought how much all this would cost him, and what John Wort would say to his extravagance. Would not that faithful steward declare, with some appearance of justification, that he was going the way of his father?

There was to be a dinner for the tenantry in one monster marquee, a dinner for the villagers from twenty miles round in two other tents, including every ploughboy who ploughed Sir Francis Clevedon's land, every crowboy who scared the rooks from the newly-sown corn; and in the afternoon and early evening there was to be dancing upon a broad expanse of level greensward in the park, where the depredations of Sir Lucas among his ancestral oaks had left a fine lawn. Later in the evening there was to be dancing for the 'quality' in the great dining-hall, which was to become a very garden of roses and exotics. Colonel Davenant's ideas were of Eastern splendour.

'We want golden tissue hangings for the doorways, and some dancing girls to perform an interlude when the people are tired, Georgie,' he said, with a desponding air; 'there's so little to be done in England.'

It was at the Colonel's suggestion that Lady Clevedon organised a band of honorary stewards, who were to wear her insignia, a moss rosebud and a knot of blue satin ribbon, and were to provide for the comfort and amusement of the guests, gentle and simple. This onerous office was assigned to all those gentlemen staying in the house, and Mr. Harcross found himself pledged to preside at one of the tables in the villagers' marquee, and to circulate all day with a bunch of blue ribbon at his button-hole. He accepted the charge meekly, and promised to do his duty, in quite a Nelsonian spirit.

'“For England, Home, and Beauty,”' he said. 'I hope the Kentish damsels are pretty, Lady Clevedon.'

The careless empty words were scarce spoken, when a little pang shot through his heart. So much that a man says in society is purely mechanical; but no sooner was that speech uttered than he bethought himself of one gentle maiden who might have been all the world to him, had he so chosen.



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

'A NATIVE SKILL HER SIMPLE ROBES EXPRESS'D.'

It was the eve of the birthday fête, a sultry afternoon with the thermometer at 80° in the shade, and not a leaf stirring in Clevedon Park. Jane Bond gave a little impatient sigh every now and then, as she sat at work in an arbour sheltered with hop-vines, and comfortably placed in a corner of the trim little garden belonging to the south lodge; a sigh which was caused partly by the heat of the weather, and partly by a natural anxiety upon the subject of her needlework.

She was making her dress for to-morrow's festival, and having only decided at the last moment that she would have a new and brilliant pink muslin, instead of a lavender garment of the same fabric, which had been her 'Sunday frock' last summer, Miss Bond was working against time. Her decision had been in some manner influenced by the present of a sovereign from Weston Vallery, ostensibly to buy a neck-ribbon.

'I know you are fond of pretty colours,' he said, 'and I want you to buy the brightest ribbon in Tunbridge. Men have no taste in these matters, or I should have chosen it for you myself.'

It was not often that Miss Bond was gratified by the gift of a sovereign, though her father was reputed to have saved money, and to be better off than most of his class. Of course, if he had been in the habit of giving his daughter casual sovereigns, he would have been less able to carry small sums to the savings-bank. Jane was clad comfortably, but soberly, as became the daughter of a God-fearing Primitive Methodist, and her father chose her gowns himself for the most part, so that she should not offend the eye of the elect by gaudy colours or eccentric patterns. In neat spots and narrow stripes, in lavenders and duns and grays, Miss Bond was obliged to walk this earth, as contentedly or discontentedly as she pleased. She kept her father's house for him, and every Saturday evening had to render up a strict account of the past week's expenses. There was more money spent upon starch than Joshua Bond approved; but if he complained of this item, he was always informed that his Sunday's white shirt was the chief cause of the expense.

'I think it's your sticking-out gowns, Jane,' the gardener would reply sternly; 'two pounds of starch in a week! It's downright sinful.'

Sometimes when Miss Bond's accounts had been particularly accurate, no odd fourpence-farthing or twopence-halfpenny deficient, and when the expenditure had been unusually light, Joshua would relax his grip upon the balance so far as to present his daughter with a stray shilling.

‘Put it in your money-box, Jane,’ he said; ‘you’ve got a money-box, I suppose?’

‘Yes, father,’ Miss Bond replied promptly, mindful of a long disused and disabled cardboard institution, with tiny glass windows, lurking somewhere on the inaccessible top shelf of an upstairs cupboard. ‘O, yes, father, I’ve got a box.’

Thus it was that on receiving Mr. Vallory’s present—Weston had found occasion to go in and out by the south gate several times since his first encounter with the gardener’s daughter—thus it was that Miss Bond, with her admirer’s sovereign in her pocket, could venture to prefer a request to her father.

‘You wouldn’t mind my wearing bright colours for once in a way, would you, father?’ she inquired in a pleading tone, when he had lighted his evening pipe, after an especially comfortable meat-tea. ‘I should look such a dowdy among all the other girls in that wishy-washy lavender thing you bought me last summer. It doesn’t take the starch well, you know, and—’

‘Doesn’t take the starch!’ cried the aggrieved parent. ‘I should like to know what material would take as much starch as you use; I sometimes think you must give it to the fowls.’

‘O, father, what a shame to say that, when I take such pains with your collars and things! How would you like your Sunday shirt to be limp and crumpled?’

‘My shirt—two pounds of starch a week for my shirt!’

‘Don’t be cross, father, or I shall be obliged to go out to service and work for somebody else. I should get wages then, and could use as much starch as I liked, and you’d have to keep a servant, and pay her for doing what I do,’ said Miss Bond, in whose breast rebellious fires were always lurking, ready to blaze up at the first provocation. ‘There’s not many girls of my age—’

‘Girls of your age! I should call you a woman!’ growled her father.

‘There’s not many young women would put up with being kept as close as I’m kept,’ continued Miss Bond recklessly. ‘Howsomever, I don’t want to complain. But as I’ve saved a few shillings, that you’ve given me now and then, I suppose you’ll make no objection to my buying a pink muslin for the “feet.”’

‘Buy what you like,’ said the father with a groan, ‘as long as it isn’t out of my money. If your own sense won’t teach you what’s proper for a young woman in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call you, I can’t teach you. Make yourself a merry-andrew if you like.’

‘A merry fiddlestick!’ exclaimed Miss Bond. ‘I don’t see why the wicked people should have all the pretty colours.’

So, having wrung this unwilling consent from her father, Jane Bond had walked to Tunbridge Wells in the early morning, and had

rived at her favourite draper's shop just as the shutters were being taken down. Here she purchased as many yards of bright pink-and-white muslin as could be bought for a sovereign, for her ideas on the subject of flouncings and pleatings were almost as extensive as West-end milliner's. She sat in her arbour this afternoon with a pile of neatly-folded muslin frilling upon the table before her, and wielded her needle with almost feverish haste, cheered by thoughts of coming triumphs.

How they would all stare at her pink dress, made in a style which she had copied from a morning dress of Lady Clevedon's—a costume devised by the great Bouffante herself! There was Mary Mason, the laundry maid—between whom and Jane Bond there was a tacit rivalry—who was going to wear a new brown alpaca, much bedecked with braid and buttons, but a very vulgar and commonplace garment compared with that enchanting muslin.

'I wonder what *he'll* think of it,' Jane said to herself, as she began to turn down an almost endless hem; and the *he* who occupied so important a place in her thoughts was not her affianced husband, Joseph Flood, but her new admirer, Weston Vallory.

The latch of the garden gate fell with a little clicking sound, while she sat working in the western sunshine. The muslin flounce dropped from her busy hands, and she looked up eagerly with a sudden deepening of her rosy cheeks. But the person who had lifted the latch was not the person she had been thinking about; and she took up the flounce again with rather an impatient twitch, and went on folding the hem. Her visitor was only Joseph Flood. She had no right to expect any one else, since it was not Mr. Vallory's habit to open the garden gate. A flirtation with a rustic beauty was pleasant enough; but Weston had too much respect for his own reputation to run the risk of being seen loafing in the lodge garden, in sentimental converse with the gardener's daughter. A little dawdling talk by the park gate, which could be cut short at a moment's warning, was the utmost indulgence he permitted himself.

Miss Bond, however, who could not estimate the extent of her admirer's prudence, and who had no small idea of her own attractions, may have nursed some vague hope of his dropping-in unexpectedly this summer evening before the eight-o'clock dinner, to while away half an hour in her society. And, lo, instead of the London dandy, with his faultless boots and wonderful waistcoat, here was only honest Joseph Flood, whose highest merit was to love her to distraction, and whose powers of expression were of the poorest. She went on folding and pinching the muslin, with the bold black eyes cast down and a somewhat sulky look in the full red lips, while Joe came ambling towards the arbour, using his long legs as if they were an embarrassment to him in the absence of his horse.

Greetings are usually dispensed with in this class of life; so the

groom hardly noticed the coldness of his reception, and dropped down upon the bench by his mistress's side without a word, put his stalwart arm round her waist, and administered the privileged kiss of an affianced husband. Jane drew herself away from him with an impatient shrug.

'I wish you wouldn't be so tiresome, Joseph,' she said peevishly. 'I'm sure the weather's too hot for kissing, and I don't believe you've shaved this morning.'

'Ah, but I have, though; I suppose one's beard grows faster this weather.'

'Your chin does scrub so; I'd as lief have a bit of emery paper rubbed across my face. Don't squeeze so close to me, Joe; there's room enough on the bench without that. I've got all those flounces to hem and put on the skirt before I go to bed to-night.'

'O, it's a new gown, is it, that there's all this fuss about?' said Joseph, contemplating the pink frills with a contemptuous air; 'then all I can say is, if you're going to be so ill-tempered every time you get a new gown, I hope you won't have many of 'em when we're married.'

'It's just like you to say that, Joseph,' replied Miss Bond, in a lofty tone; 'now if you were a gentleman, you'd take an interest in my dresses, and think nothing too good for me.'

'But I ain't a gentleman, you see, and if you're to lose your temper with me for the sake of a parcel of fal-lals like that there, I'd rather see you dressed anyhow than decked out as fine as a peacock.'

Miss Bond tossed her head and went on with her work assiduously. It was not the first time she had seen Joseph Flood since her acquaintance with Mr. Vallory, and in the course of previous interviews she had favoured him with vague hints of being admired and appreciated by people of higher capacity to admire and appreciate than he possessed, and with ampler resources wherewith to back their opinions. Joseph was of a jealous nature, and had been quick to resent these remarks.

'It doesn't much matter whether you like my dress or not, that's one comfort,' the girl said presently; 'there's more people in the world besides you, and I daresay there'll be some at the "feet" to-morrow that *will* admire me.'

'I suppose you mean a pack of fine gentlemen,' replied Joseph sullenly; 'no prudent girl wants their admiration.'

'Then I'm afraid I'm not a prudent girl,' remarked Jane, with a little affected giggle; 'for I do like to be admired, and I set more store upon a gentleman's admiration than a common man's.'

'I'm sorry for you then, Jane Bond,' said the lover sternly; 'for if that's true, you'll never make a good wife to an honest working man. But I don't believe it is true. You're always up to some

essed game of this kind, trying to take a rise out of me. And yet I know there never was a young man fonder of a young woman than I am of you. But I'm not the sort of man to stand any nonsense.'

This kind of protestation was gratifying to Miss Bond's vanity, and she was somewhat mollified by it, and even allowed the arm of her legitimate lover to steal around her waist and remain there playfully while she stitched her flounces; but throughout that evening the talk between the affianced ones was of a skirmishing character, and Jane Bond indulged in numerous suggestive remarks, all tending to show how much brighter and better her lot in life might have been, had she so pleased, than Mr. Flood the groom could possibly make it. She was all good temper and high spirits, however, for the rest of the evening, pleased with the effect of her dress as it proceeded towards completion. She insisted on Mr. Flood staying to supper, and cut him the most delicate slices of cold boiled bacon, and graciously compounded a glass of gin-and-water for him at her husband's behest; but notwithstanding these civilities, Joseph Flood left the south lodge in a savage humour, and bent his steps towards his bedchamber over the stables meditating vengeance, convinced that Jane Bond meant to fool him.

'She's just the kind of woman to do it,' he thought; 'she knows she's the prettiest girl within twenty mile—ay, within fifty mile, I'll warrant—and she takes advantage of it. I'll be bound that some of those London dandies have been talking their nonsense to her—the Captain, perhaps; there's nothing like a soldier for that sort of mischief. But if she does try to make a fool of me, I'll be even with her, and I'll be even with the man that comes between us.'

He was a determined young fellow, this Joseph Flood; a muscular Christian, with more muscularity than Christianity, and in the one matter of his attachment to Jane Bond his sentiments were of a somewhat desperate character. She had played her fish a considerable time before she netted him, holding him at arm's-length, pretending to be quite indifferent to him one day, delighting him by her amiability the next, and appearing absolutely to detest him the day after that. These alternate hot and cold douches, these alternations of despair and delight, had the intended effect. A prize so difficult to win seemed to Mr. Flood the one crowning reward of man's labours. He wooed the gardener's daughter with a boundless patience. It was only when she did at last consent to pledge herself to him, declaring that she had been bothered into saying yes, that Mr. Flood assumed a more independent tone, treating the lady beforehand as his own peculiar property rather than as a divinity to whom he was bound to pay continual worship.

This independent manner of his, this unpleasant way of taking everything for granted, was particularly provoking to Jane Bond,



who had an insatiable appetite for flattery. She did not rest until she had found out her lover's weak point, and that she could torture him into savage fits of jealousy. Having discovered this power, she used it rather frequently, and their walks to and from chapel were apt to be spent in silent sulkiness or open quarrelling. Yet the young man clung to her, and went on loving her, and looked forward to the day when she was to be his wife.

'If you was to play me a trick, Jenny; if you was to jilt me and marry another fellow, I think I should be tempted to murder you,' he said to her one day, during the first moments of reconciliation after an unusually angry quarrel.

'Wouldn't it be wiser to murder the other fellow?' Miss Bond asked, laughing.

'Perhaps I might do both,' answered Joseph Flood, in a tone that was sufficiently serious to alarm his betrothed.

She clung to his arm quite affectionately, more gratified by this threat than by any compliment he'd ever paid her.

'I do think you're fond of me, Joseph,' she said; 'and I don't believe there's any love worth having without jealousy. As for playing you any tricks, there's no fear of that. But I can't help wishing sometimes that we were both better off than we are. I think I'd rather die than look forward to being such a drudge as most of the women I know come to after marriage.'

'There's no call for you to be a drudge, Jenny. You can be as smart after marriage as you are now. It's only slovens that come to be drudges.'

'Ah, you don't know. Men never understand how much work a woman has to do. You'd want your victuals cooked and your clothes washed, just as father does; and if there was children, there'd be them to do for, and the shop to look after too, when you was out of the way.'

'I thought you'd like the notion of the shop, Jane,' said the lover, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. In his own idea, a shop was a kind of ready-made income without work or effort. He would only have to sit behind his counter reading a newspaper, or asleep with his head against the wall, snoring peacefully in the sunshine, while the money dropped into the till.

'Yes, the shop's all very well,' answered Jane. 'I sometimes fancy I should like weighing things, and have a lot of nice little drawers full of starch, and mustard, and rice, and sago, and all that, and a little stock of fancy stationery in the window laid out tempting like, and perhaps even a few pots of bear's-grease, and sixpenny bottles of lavender-water, and neat little boxes of hair-pins. I've heard tell there's a deal of profit on them small things. But when it came to be the same from week's end to week's end, and perhaps bad debts; and after all it's hard work, like anything else—'

'Then drop the notion of the shop, Jane. *I don't care ; I can keep on in service.*'

'O, no, that would never do. I couldn't marry to have my husband in service. People would say I was very hard driven to get a husband.'

'They could never think that of you, Jenny, even if they said it. But I'm blest if I know what you do want, if you don't want me to have the shop at Rayton that we've always talked of.'

Perhaps, had Jane been closely questioned, she herself would have found it very difficult to explain her desires. She only felt a vague and general discontent. It would be much better to keep a shop and to be an independent matron—nay, even a person of some importance—in Rayton village, than to be under her father's stern dominion in the south lodge. And yet it seemed a sorry ending of all those fine stories which had been told her by stray admirers, and by that perpetual comforter, her looking-glass. She wished she had not been so heartily tired of her father's rule, and the dulness of her life ; that she could have afforded to wait a few years longer for that possible admirer looming in the future, whose advent so many of her admirers in the present had prophesied—the rich gentleman who would some day woo her for his wife. She had never read novels, and was perplexed by no sentimental foreshadowings. But she did cherish that one fond dream of a rich husband, and she did think it a hard thing that the wealthy wooer had not yet appeared, and that out of sheer weariness of spirit she must needs throw herself away upon a groom.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

' THEN FELL UPON THE HOUSE A SUDDEN GLOOM.'

LADY CLEVEDON'S invitations had been sent far and wide, to neighbours who were not tenants as well as to neighbours who were, and amongst other outsiders Richard Redmayne received one of the gilt-edged illuminated cards, prepared by a London lithographer from a design of Georgie's own. Colonel Davenant had insisted that even the invitation cards should be what he called 'a feature.'

Rick Redmayne, who had seemed to himself for a long time to exist outside the common joys and sorrows of mankind, put the gay-looking ticket into his breast-pocket with a brief laugh of scorn.

'As if such a thing was in my line,' he said to himself ; 'but it was kind of Lady Clevedon to send it—and of course she didn't know. If Grace had been alive now—'

He could imagine himself going to the rustic festival with his daughter on his arm ; could see her face as it would have looked amidst the summer holiday-making ; could see the soft blue eyes brighten as they would have brightened at sight of the invitation

card ; could fancy how her childish soul would have been fascinated by the gold and colour, and how she would have treasured the card in her workbox as a relic when the fête was done. With her he could have drunk the cup of simple pleasure to the dregs ; without her what could such a holiday seem to him but weariness and vexation ?

He put the invitation in his pocket, and would have thought no more of the matter had he been permitted to think his own thoughts. This liberty, however, was not allowed him : it was impossible to exist during the week before Sir Francis Clevedon's birthday and not hear of the Clevedon fête. Even he, who so rarely passed the boundaries of his own narrowed home, could not escape the popular agitation. Clevedon fête was the sauce which Mrs. Bush served with every meal she set before him. It was in vain that he professed his indifference. A mind overcharged as hers was would find some vent, and as her 'goodman' was for the most part an absentee, Mr. Redmayne had the benefit of her intelligence. She could not set her feet beyond the garden, or take in a joint from the butcher, without hearing something about the Cleveland festivities. In the morning she heard for the first time of the fireworks, and of the men who had come down from London to fix them ; in the afternoon a neighbour brought her tidings of the lamps, from information received from that important functionary the village postman, who spoke with the voice of authority ; lamps which were to be of divers colours, like the 'innumilations' Mrs. Bush had seen in London at her Majesty's coronation, when she was in service as nursemaid at Peckham Rye—lamps which, according to a privileged communication from the above-named postman, were to number upwards of a 'milliond.'

Richard Redmayne heard so much about the festival, that at last, like the little old woman in Southey's story of the Three Bears, he said a bad word about it.

'You shouldn't lose your temper over it, Mr. Redmayne,' Mrs. Bush exclaimed, with friendly reproof. 'What you ought to do is to go to Clevedon and enjoy yourself, like other people, for once in a way. I'm sure you've moped long enough here ; and if it was ten thousand daughters you'd lost—not as I'm saying a word again Miss Gracey, which she was as sweet a young woman as ever stepped—you couldn't have took the loss more to heart than you have took it. But there's a time for all things, which I believe it was king Solomon hisself made the remark ; leastways, I know I've heard it in Kingsbury Church, before Bush over-persuaded me into joining the Primitive Methodists ; and if it wasn't Solomon it must have been David, or Nebuchadnezzar. There's a time for all things, Mr. Redmayne ; and it isn't the time to mope when everybody within twenty miles is going to be happy ; and even me and Bush asked, through Bush's brother being a tenant on the Clevedon estate. Mr. Wort

brought me the card yesterday ; not all gold and colours like yours, but a neat laylock, gilt-edged.'

Mr. Redmayne bore this remonstrance with tolerable patience, but had not the remotest idea of being influenced by it. Yet, when the much-expected morning dawned, serene and cloudless—for weather is sometimes propitious even in England ; when the day grew older, and Kingsbury joy-bells rang gaily over woods and meadows, hopfields where the tender vines were climbing, cornfields where the golden wheat had ripened for the sickle, and where 'the free and happy barley was smiling on the scythe,'—Mr. Redmayne could not help feeling that this day was not quite as other days, and that it was a dismal thing to stand alone and wilfully aloof from all his fellow-men on such a day as this.

If the day had been wet, if a chill gray sky had lowered on Sir Francis Clevedon and all his preparations for a festival, if a drizzling incessant rain had foreboded the extinction of lamps and fireworks, Mr. Redmayne might have smoked his pipe by his desolate hearth in the old farmhouse kitchen, and laughed scornfully at the folly of his race, conjuring up a vision of sodden garments and disappointed faces, rain oozing slowly from the canvas roofs, the gay flag-bedecked tents transformed into gigantic shower-baths. But a misanthrope must have been of a very sour temper who could escape some touch of regret for his own lonely condition, some faint yearning for sympathy with his species, some feeble ghost-like renewal of old feelings, in such a golden noontide, and amidst so fair a landscape as that which lay around the home of Richard Redmayne. Several times had Mrs. Bush repeated her remonstrances, with every variety of rustic eloquence and much amplitude of speech, but to no effect. Mr. Redmayne declared most decisively that he would have no share in the day's rejoicings.

'A pretty figure I should cut amongst a pack of fools dancing and capering,' he cried contemptuously. 'I should seem like a ghost come from the grave.'

'Perhaps you might, if you went in that shabby old shooting-jacket as you wear Sundays and work-a-days, which is a disgrace to a gentleman as well to do as you are,' replied the plain-spoken Mrs. Bush, who seemed to think that the inhabitants of the spirit world might suffer from a want of good clothing ; 'but not if you dressed yourself in some of the things you've got hoarded up in those two sea-chests of yours, o' purpose for the moths, one 'ud think, to see the way you let 'em lie there. Now, do smarten yourself up a bit, and trim your whiskers, and all that, Mr. Redmayne, and don't be the only person within twenty miles of Clevedon to hang back from going. It looks so pintoed. It looks almost as if you'd committed a murder, or somethink dreadful, and was afeard to face the light of day.'

This last argument touched him a little, indifferent as he professed to be about the world's esteem. It was not of himself he thought even in this, but of that dead girl who had made up his world. Was he quite true to her memory in holding himself thus utterly aloof from his kind? Might he not by that very act have given occasion for slanders, which might never have arisen but for that, or which, at any rate, might have been crushed by his putting a bold front on matters, and finding some answer for every question that could be asked about his lost girl?

'Good God!' he said to himself, strangely affected by this random shot of Mrs. Bush's, 'I may have made people think that things were worse than they really were, by my conduct.'

He brooded on this idea a good deal; but it was scarcely this which influenced him on Sir Francis Clevedon's birthday, when, about an hour and a half after the Bushes had departed, radiant in their Sunday clothes, and with faces varnished by the application of strong yellow soap, he suddenly made up his mind to follow them and share the pleasures of the day. They could be no pleasures to him. That was out of the question. But he would go among the noise and riot, and eating and drinking, and hold his own with the merriest, and let the world see that he was Rick Redmayne still, as good a man as he had been six years ago, before he sailed across the world to redeem his fortunes.

Strange how lonely the house seemed to him that summer day, when Mrs. Bush and her Goodman had shut the door behind them, after much scudding to and fro and up and down at the last moment, in quest of forgotten trifles. It was not that he had ever affected Mrs. Bush's company, or that he had ever found her anything but an unmitigated bore. Yet no sooner was she departed than he sorely missed the clatter of her pattens, the cloop of her pails, the noise of her industrious broom sweeping assiduously in passages where there had been no footsteps to carry dirt. Dreary and empty beyond all measure seemed the old homestead, which had once been so blithe. He went in and out of the rooms without purpose, into that tabernacle of respectability the best parlour, where not so much as the position of a chair had been altered since his wedding day; where the chintz covers, which had been faded when he peered into the mystic chamber wondering, a baby in his mother's arms, were only a little paler and more feeble of tint to-day. Nothing could wear out in a room so seldom tenanted; it could only moulder imperceptibly with a gradual decay, like furniture in the sealed houses of some lava-buried city.

To-day that pale presence of the dead, whereby these rooms were always more or less haunted, smote him with a keener anguish than he could bear. The empty house was insupportable with that ghostly company.



‘And yet, if she could take a palpable form and come back and smile upon me, God knows that I would welcome her fondly, even though I knew she were dead. Why cannot our dead come back to us sometimes, if only for one sweet solemn hour? Is God so hard that He will not lend them to us? O, Gracey, to have you with me for ever so brief a span, to hear from your own lips that heaven is fair and you are happy among the angels, to tell you how I have missed you! But there only comes the dull shadow, the dreary thought; no dear face, no gentle loving eyes.’

Many and many a time he had sat in the sunshine, in the moonlight, lost in a waking dream, and wondering if heaven would ever vouchsafe him a vision, such as men saw of old, when angelic creatures and the spirits of the dead seemed nearer this earth than they are to-day. Many a time he had wished that the impalpable air would thicken and shape itself into the form he loved; but the vision never came. The rooms were haunted, but it was with bitter thoughts of the past; his sleep was broken, but only with confused patches of dreaming, in which the image of the beloved dead was entangled in some web of foolishness and bewilderment. Never had she appeared to him as he would have her come, serene and radiant with the radiance of a soul that wanders down from heaven to comfort an earthly mourner.

He went out into the garden and smoked a pipe under the cedar, but here too the solitude which had been the habit of his life lately seemed strangely intensified to-day. It might have been that sound of distant joy-bells, or the knowledge that all the little world within a twenty-mile radius was making merry so near him. It would be difficult to define the cause, but a sense of isolation crept into his mind. He smoked a second pipe, and drank a tumbler of spirit-and-water, that perilous restorer to which he had too frequent recourse of late; sat for an hour or more under the low-spreading branches which scarcely cleared his head when he stood upright, and then could endure this oppression of silence and loneliness no longer, and resolved to go to the Clevedon festival.

‘I needn’t join their tomfoolery,’ he said to himself; ‘I can look on.’

He went up to his room, and dressed himself in some of those clothes which had lain so long idle in his sea-chest. He was a handsome man even now, in spite of the gloomy look that had become his natural expression; a fine-looking man still, in spite of his bent shoulders; but he was only the wreck of the man he had been before his daughter’s death; only the wreck of that man who sailed home from the distant world, fortunate and full of hope, coming back to his only child.

The dinner for the cottagers, farm-servants, gardeners, game-keepers, and small fry of all kinds was to begin at half-past one;

the dinner for the superior tenantry, to which Mr. Redmayne was bidden, at three o'clock. He had plenty of time to walk to Clevedon before the banquet began, if he cared to take his place among the revellers, but he did not care about the ceremony of dining. He meant only to stroll about the park, take a distant view of the rejoicings, and walk home again in the twilight. The Bushes did not expect to return till midnight, as the fireworks, which were the great feature of the entertainment, were only to begin at ten; but Richard Redmayne had no idea of staying to stare at many-coloured sky-rockets, or showers of falling stars, or catherine wheels, or roman candles.

He took the short cut to Clevedon, the path that skirted meadows and cornfields, by those tall hedgerows which had sheltered Grace and her lover in the fatal summer that was gone. Slowly and listlessly he went his way, stopping to lean against a stile and smoke a meditative pipe before his journey was half done; lingering to look at the ripened corn sometimes, with the critical eye of experience, but not with the keen interest of possession. Even if these acres had still been 'in hand,' it is doubtful whether he would have surveyed them with his old earnestness. The very key-stone of life's arch was gone. He had no motive for wishing to increase his store; hardly any motive for living, except that one undefined idea of a day of reckoning to come sooner or later betwixt him and his child's destroyer.

To-day, dawdling in the sunshine, amidst that peaceful landscape, going on such a purposeless errand, hardly knowing why he went, there was surely nothing farther from his thoughts than that the day of reckoning had come.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

'OF ALL MEN ELSE I HAVE AVOIDED THEE.'

PERHAPS, if a man must throw his money away somehow or other, which appears to be almost an absolute condition in the lives of most men, there is no pleasanter mode of scattering it than upon such a rustic carnival as Georgie Clevedon and her father had organised for the celebration of the baronet's twenty-ninth birthday. In that cup of pleasure one would suppose there can be scarcely one bitter drop, provided always that everybody within a certain distance is invited; that there is no forgotten fairy to mutter her maledictions in the midst of the banquet, and invoke misfortune upon the prince or princess of the house. And yet who can tell, even in that simple world, what heart-burnings may disturb the joy of Susan Jones at sight of Mary Smith's new gown, what a sense of humiliation may depress Mrs. Brown on beholding Mrs. Robinson in a new *bonnet*, while Brown's scanty wage has not afforded his partner so

much as a yard of ribbon to smarten her faded head-gear? Or who shall presume to say that the jealous pangs which gnaw the entrails of some rustic Strephon at sight of his Chloe's flirtation with Damon are not as fierce an agony as the torments of any brilliant dandy in the Household Brigade distracted by the infidelities of a countess?

Sir Francis Clevedon did not consider the thing so deeply as he looked out on the tents and flags and flowers and fountains and gaily-dressed crowd scattered over a vast green amphitheatre under the noontide sun—a cheerful picture framed by a background of old forest trees, amidst whose cool umbrage the scared deer had fled for sanctuary. He thought that Georgie had hit upon a very pleasant manner of fooling away two or three hundred pounds, whatever Mr. Wort—with a pencil behind his ear and an ancient little account-book in his hand—might say to the contrary.

‘You’re sure you’re pleased, then, Frankie?’ says Georgie, in her little coaxing way, sidling up to her husband as she stands by him on the terrace-walk before the house, looking down at the crowd. ‘I should be quite miserable if you didn’t like it all. You see, it seems such a dreadful thing for you to marry a girl without sixpence, and for her to begin by spending your money at such a rate; but, then, it’s only once a year, and it’s all for your sake, so I do hope you’re pleased.’

‘As if I could help being pleased with you in that bonnet,’ said Frank, surveying the bright face framed in white azaleas and blonde. Georgie is all in white to-day, an airy sylph-like costume, in which she looks scarcely seventeen. Sibyl is near her, also in white, dotted about with little bouquets of forget-me-nots, and with forget-me-nots in her bonnet; and Sibyl is very agreeably occupied in a flirtation with her brother’s friend, Captain Hardwood of the Engineers. The Clevedon guests from outside have not yet begun to arrive; the visitors in the house circulate languidly—looking out of windows, or sauntering up and down the terrace, watching that crowd of creatures of an inferior order from afar, with a kind of mildly curious interest which one might feel about common objects by the seashore, and with hardly any more sense of affinity than one has with a jelly-fish or any other invertebrate animal.

‘I am so glad they have a nice day, poor dear things,’ said Mrs. Cheviot, who was good-natured, but not of the district-visiting order, and who had no personal acquaintance with these helots.

‘Yes,’ drawled Weston, ‘I suppose we ought to be pleased for their sakes; but it would have been more fun to see them struggling in the rain with umbrellas. I was at York summer-meeting the year that Moor-hen was expected to win, but didn’t; and the rain was incessant, and I can assure you the people on the shilling stands and places were very good fun. I think we should have had more amusement to-day if the weather had been bad; to see the girls

dancing in pattens, for instance—a *pas de pattens*—would have been capital.'

'I suppose that's what they mean by a patten fair?' said the youngest Miss Stalman; 'because it always rains in Ireland, you know.'

Mrs. Harcross sat in a garden-chair near this group, and looked listlessly at the people in the park, sauntering to and fro to the music of a local brass band braying out the march from Gounod's *Faust* in abominable time, with a kind of staggering sound, as if a regiment of gigantic toy-soldiers were lifting their clumsy wooden legs to the music. There was a good deal of talk and merriment already among the rural visitors. An Aunt Sally had been set up under the trees, and the lads of the village were pelting the grim old lady's visage; but every one felt that dinner was to be the first great event of the day, and that everything before dinner was merely preliminary and unimportant. The tenants, whose appetites had been sharpened by a longish drive through the morning air, were rather inclined to envy the peasantry their earlier meal; but, then, there was a satisfaction in knowing that their banquet would be a joy in the present when the plebeian feast was only a memory of the past.

Very bitter were the thoughts of Augusta Harcross as she looked across that festive crowd—the tenants and retainers who should have been the tenants and retainers of her husband. She did not grudge Sir Francis Clevedon the cheap popularity of to-day; indeed, she considered the whole business a foolish and frivolous waste of money. Not such renown as might be won by hogsheads of ale and roasted oxen did she desire for her husband, nor would she have valued the commonplace distinction of a Lady Bountiful for herself. She thought of what Hubert might have made of these advantages which Sir Francis held to so little purpose. She thought of him not wasting his powers upon the dryasdust arguments of law-courts or committee-rooms, but mounting that splendid ladder of statesmanship whereby a man achieves that renown which must ever seem the chiefest of earthly glory to the British mind. Now he spent his labour for that which profited him naught, since committee-rooms and arbitration cases, though remunerative enough in a sordid sense, were hardly on the high road to the woolsack; but with six or seven thousand a year of his own, and the status of landowner, it would have been different. Such an income, augmented by hers, would have enabled him to hold any position.

'He shall go into parliament next session,' she said to herself. 'He *shall* win a name that men will respect. I will not let myself be crushed by this horrid secret. A barrister's fame is so common. I might be proud of him, if he were to distinguish himself in the *political world*; I might be proud of him, in spite of what I know.'

It was a strangely blended sentiment of selfish shame and regretful affection for him. If she had loved him less, she might have felt her own wrong less bitterly; but she did love him, and she was sorry for him, and there was a relenting tenderness in her mind, even in the face of that coolness between them, which she would have been the last woman in the world to dispel by any word or act of hers. She had no fear that their estrangement would be a matter of very long duration. He would humble himself, of course, sooner or later; and when he had done so, when he had fully repented himself of this tacit rebellion, she would receive the prodigal, and propose the seat in parliament and a partial cessation from his legal labours. She would remind him of a fact which had been perhaps too much ignored by both—that her fortune was his fortune, and that the renown which he might achieve by a disinterested pursuit of fame would be dearer to her than any of those sordid successes which were only estimable by the amount of pounds shillings and pence that they brought with them.

She meant to do all this in good time. She was not an enthusiast, who, on being inspired by a new idea, runs off flushed and eager to communicate it to the ear of sympathy. She made up her mind with deliberation, and allowed her purpose to incubate, as it were, in the silent calmness of her soul. She felt that she was taking a generous—nay, even noble—view of her husband's position, and that he could not fail to receive her proposition with ready assent and some gratitude.

'There are women who would part from him for ever after such a discovery,' she said to herself; and such a parting had indeed been her first thought, strangled in its birth by the consideration of the world's wonder. Mrs. Harcross was a person who could not permit the world to wonder about her.

Mr. Harcross had his duties as steward; and before one o'clock, he and Captain Hardwood, Weston Vallory, and Mr. M'Gall the reviewer were amongst the crowd, duly blue-ribboned and rose-budded. Weston found his way to Miss Bond, radiant in her pink dress. She had contrived to slip her moorings from her father's arm; and while that seriously-minded gentleman was arguing on the subject of justification by faith with another seriously-minded gentleman, Jane had drifted as far away from him as she could, and was receiving the compliments of rural swains, with all the more freedom on account of the enforced absence of Mr. Flood, who was on duty in the stables at this hour, assisting in the putting-up of wagonettes and whitechapel carts. The barouches and landaus and omnibuses of the gentry were only just beginning to arrive.

Jane welcomed Mr. Vallory with a blush and a simper. Her rural admirers were very soon made to feel themselves at a disadvantage beside this splendid London dandy, and shambled off with a sense of



defeat and discomfiture to console themselves with a 'shy' at Aunt Sally.

'How charming you look in that pink gown!' said Weston, surveying the damsel with his bold stare; 'it's the prettiest costume I've seen to-day.'

'I'm glad you like it,' the girl answered. 'I bought it with your present; but of course I daredn't tell father so. He'd have turned me out of doors, I think, if he'd found out as I'd taken that sovereign.'

'Then you shall not run the risk of expulsion again, for when I give you another present, it shall be a gown of my own choosing.'

'O no, nor that wouldn't do neither; leastways, father would be sure to find out if I were to get a new gown like that. I had to tell him a fib about this one—that I'd saved up my money to buy it. He does give me a shilling once in a way; but he's dreadful near. I know I didn't ought to have taken that money from you; but I could so want to buy something new for to-day, and it seemed to come so handy.'

'Sweet simplicity!' said Weston, with his artificial smile. 'There are women in London with not half your attractions whose milliners' bills come to five hundred a year; and are sometimes paid, too.'

He strolled by Miss Bond's side under the trees, thinking this the pleasantest part of his stewardship. Mr. Harcross met them face to face presently, and marked his friend Weston's rustic flirtation as he went by, in conversation with one of the chief tenants, a stalwart farmer of the genuine *Speed-the-Plough* type, to whom he had been specially introduced by Sir Francis, and who volunteered to support him as vice-chairman at the dinner-table. The stewards had drawn lots for the tables at which they were to preside, and Mr. Harcross's lot had fallen on one of the tables at the earlier and humbler banquet.

'I'll stand by you, Mr. Chairman,' said Mr. Holby, the farmer; 'I think I know everybody within ten mile of Kingsbury, man, woman, and child; and all I wish is, that there was enough of 'em to gather my hops without employing any of these here Irish tramps.'

'You belong to Kingsbury, do you, Mr. Holby?' Hubert Harcross asked, with a thoughtful face, when he had done a good deal of duty talk about corn and hops.

'Higgs's farm, sir, within a mile of Kingsbury church. I've farmed that land of Sir Francis's ever since old Higgs died, which is above seven-and-thirty year ago.'

'Higgs's farm; yes, I remember. That's not far from a place called Brierwood, is it?'

'Not above two mile. I've walked it many a time between tea and supper, when Richard Redmayne was a pleasanter kind of fellow than he is now, twelve or fifteen year ago, when his daughter that died was only a little lass not higher than that.'

He held his sunburnt hand a yard or so from the ground, looking downward fondly as if he could see the fair head of that little lass as he had seen it years ago.

Who could have thought that it would be so sharp a pain only to hear of these things? Mr. Harcross felt as if a knife had gone through his heart. It was some moments before he could speak. O God, to think of her a little innocent child, and that she should have been predestined to love him dearly, and to die broken-hearted for his sin!

He would have let the subject drop at once, as a theme unspeakably painful, had he not been eager to satisfy himself upon one point. There had been something in the farmer's speech which mystified him not a little.

'You spoke of Richard Redmayne as if you had seen him lately,' he said; 'I understood the whole family had emigrated.'

'Ay, ay,' answered the farmer, with ponderous slowness; 'the family did emigrate—Jim and his wife, and the two boys, tall well-grown lads as you could see anywheres. They went out to Australia, where Richard had bought a stiffish bit of land, I've heard say, for about a tenth part the price an acre as you'd give in these parts. They went out, Jim, his wife, and boys, soon after Richard's daughter died. She died away from home, you see, sir, and there was a good deal of trouble about it; and I don't believe as anybody hereabouts knows azactly the rights and wrongs of that story; and it's my idea as there was more wrongs than rights in it.'

Whereupon Mr. Harcross had to hear the story of Grace Redmayne's death, delivered conjecturally, by Mr. Holby of Higgs's farm, after a rambling fashion, with much commentary.

'It were a sad loss for poor Rick, sir; for she was as sweet a young woman as ever stept,' concluded the farmer.

Mr. Harcross was compelled to repeat his question.

'I asked you if Mr. Redmayne was still in Australia,' he said.

'Ay, ay, to be sure, to be sure. No, not Rick Redmayne. Jim and his wife and boys are over yonder, but Richard come home the other day, as changed a man as I ever saw. Him and me used to have many a pleasant hour together of a summer evening, with a pipe of tobacco and a jug of home-brewed. But that's all over now. He hasn't been anigh his friends since he come back; and he lets his friends see pretty plain as he don't want them to go anigh him.'

'He is at home, then—at Brierwood?'

'Yes. I saw him standing by the gate the night before last, as I drove home from market.'

To say that this intelligence awakened anything like fear in Hubert Harcross's mind would be to do him injustice. He was not the kind of man to fear the face of his fellow-man. But the knowledge that Richard Redmayne was near at hand filled him with a vague

horror nevertheless. 'Of all men else I have avoided thee.' True that even if they met face to face, there was little chance of his being recognised by Grace's father. That foolish gift, the locket with his likeness in it, had been lost. Grace had told him that during the brief dreamlike railway journey betwixt Tunbridge and London, when she had sat with her hand in his, confessing all the sadness of her life without him. Strange to look back upon it all, and think of himself, almost as if he had been some one else outside that sorrowful story; to think of himself and all he had hoped for and looked forward to that day, when he had deemed it possible to serve two masters, to hold his appointed place in the world, and yet make for himself one sweet and secret sanctuary remote from all worldly influences.

No, that schoolboy love-token, the locket, being happily gone, there was no fear of any recognition on the part of the farmer, even if they were to meet; nor under the name of Harcross could Richard Redmayne suspect the presence of Walgrave. 'So, for once in a way, that absurd change of name is an advantage,' thought Mr. Harcross.

The first dinner-bell rang while he was holding this review of the situation, a cheery peal, which brightened the faces of all the early diners. Colonel Davenant would fain have fired a cannon as the signal of the feast, but, this idea not being received favourably, was obliged to content himself with the great alarm-bell, which hung in a cupola above the hall, and a fine old Indian gong, which had been brought out upon the lawn, where the Colonel himself officiated, with very much the air of an enterprising showman at a country fair.

'Now, Harcross,' he cried presently, swooping down upon the barrister as he sauntered under the trees beside Mr. Holby of Higgs's farm,—'now, Harcross, you know your tent, don't you, old fellow, the one with the blue flags? Your people are pouring in already. You really ought to be in your place, you know; come along.'

'Be in time,' said Mr. Harcross, laughing; 'just agoing to begin.'

He shook off all thoughts of Grace Redmayne's father, for the moment at least, but not without an effort, and made his way to the blue-flag-bedecked marquee, attended by his esquire, Farmer Holby.

'You must propose almost all the toasts, Mr. Holby,' he said, in his careless way; 'for I really haven't a notion of what I am expected to do.'

This was hardly fair to Colonel Davenant, who had existed for the last week with a pencil in one hand and a pocket-book in the other, and had drawn up elaborate plans of the tables, with everybody's appointed place thereat—so that no rural Capulet should find himself seated next his detested Montague, no village Ghibelline discover a Guelph in his neighbour—and made out lists of all the health-

proposing and thanks-giving with as much brown study and mental hard labour as if he had been endeavouring to discover the 'differentiate between the finite and the infinite,' which the Yankee lady was lately reported to have hit upon. What pains he had taken to coach Mr. Harcross in his duties! And it had all come to this!

Clevedon lawn at beat of gong was a pretty sight. There were all the elements of an agreeable picture—balmy summer weather, snow-white tents, many-coloured flags fluttering gaily in the sunshine, a crowd of happy people, an atmosphere of eating and drinking, and for a background the fine old red-brick house, with its stone mullions and cornices, and quaint pinnacles standing out in sharp relief against a sky that was bluer than the skies that canopy an English scene are wont to be. But fair as the scene might be without, perhaps the hungry villagers crowding into the tents thought the scene within much pleasanter. What could be more picturesque than those ponderous sirloins; those Gargantuan rounds, with appropriate embellishment of horse-radish and parsley;—those dainty fowls—fowls even for the commonalty—those golden-cruled pies, with pigeons' feet turned meekly upward, as in mute protest against their barbarous murder, pies whose very odour from afar off was to distraction savoury; that delicate pigling, slain untimely; those forequarters of adolescent sheep, which were still by courtesy lamb; those plump young geese, foredoomed to die before their legitimate hour? What contrast of colour could be more delightful than that presented by the mellow Indian-red and burnt-sienna hues of the meat and poultry against the cool tender greens of the salads, the golden yolks of eggs in rings of virgin white, the paler gold of the gigantic French loaves, baked on purpose for the festival, from which a man might cut a quarter of a yard or so without making any serious difference in the bulk of the whole?

At one end of the tent, and conveniently near the chairman's elbow, there was a small colony of beer-barrels, and a stack of wines and spirits, as neatly arranged and as amply provided as in the lazaret of an East Indiaman. Over these it was Mr. Harcross's duty to preside, assisted by the under butler.

He found himself seated in his place presently, amidst a tremendous shuffling of feet, and scrooping of benches, and whispering, and subdued tittering, as the guests arranged themselves, under the all-directing eye of the Colonel, who had appointed himself commander-in-chief or generalissimo of all the tables.

'Silence, if you please, ladies and gentlemen! silence for grace!' he roared in stentorian accents, which might have made his fortune as a toastmaster; whereat a very mild-looking gentleman, with a white cravat and long straight hair, whom Mr. Harcross had not observed before, rose at the other end of the tent, and invoked a blessing upon the banquet, which was almost as long as his hair. Directly



it was over there arose a general gasp, as of relief, and then a tremendous clattering of knives and forks.

The Colonel walked round the tent, calling attention to the different viands.

'There's a magnificent sirloin yonder, ma'am, roasted to a turn,' he said confidentially to a ponderous matron; 'I should recommend you a plate of *that*. And if you, my love, have any taste for roast goose,' he went on to a blushing damsel next but one, 'there's as fine a bird as ever was hatched just before you. Which gentleman on this side of the table will undertake to cut up a goose?' And so on, and so on, with variations, continued the Colonel, till he had made the round of one tent and shot off to do his duty in the other.

Mr. Harcross, in a much more subdued manner, made himself agreeable to the company. He saw that all glasses were duly filled with sparkling ale, or the more sustaining porter; he administered sherry to the fairer sex, and kept an eye even on distant diners. The rural population proving unequal to the manipulation of carving-knives and forks, he sent for one joint after another, and demolished them with a quiet dexterity which, to these wondering rustics, appeared a species of legerdemain. He did more carving in half an hour than he ever remembered to have accomplished in his life before, since his lot had fallen in the days of vicarious carving, and he contrived to keep up a running flirtation all the time with the young lady seated on his left hand. He had an old woman in a black bonnet on his right, the most ancient female in Kingsbury parish, who was reputed to have used the first mangle ever seen in those parts, and to have been the last person to ride pillion.

This honourable matron being stone deaf, the attentions of Mr. Harcross were necessarily confined to a careful provision for her creature comforts. He supplied her with tender breasts of chicken and the crumbiest pieces of bread he could obtain, and devoutly hoped that she would mumble her share of the feast without choking herself. Having performed these charitable offices, he was free to devote his conversational powers to his left-hand neighbour, who was young and handsome, and was, moreover, the very young person he had seen engaged in a flirtation with Weston Vallery.

Mr. Harcross was in that mood in which a man is ready for any immediate amusement, however puerile, that may serve to divert his mind from painful memories—for any excitement, however vulgar, which may help to numb the slow agony of remorse. There was no pleasure to him in talking shallow nonsense with this low-born beauty, but the rattle and the laughter and the wine made up some kind of relief. He took a good deal more wine than he was accustomed to take at that time of day; he talked more than he was in the habit of talking, until he shone out in a gentlemanly way at the eight-o'clock dinner; and the talk and the wine together kept him



om thinking of Richard Redmayne. He did not glance round the table with fearful eyes, dreading to see that fatal unknown figure appear, Banquo-like, amidst the revellers. That most unwelcome discovery which he had made by means of Mr. Holby the farmer had left only an undefined sense of discomfort—a feeling that there was trouble near.

Miss Bond, in the mean time, was very well pleased with her position and surroundings. In the first place, it was a grand thing for her to be in the post of honour, next the gentleman-steward, to which place she had drifted in the general confusion, while more timid maidens hung back upon the arms of kindred or lovers, waiting to be pushed into their seats; and in the second place, it was a pleasant thing to have disappointed Weston Vallory, who had expressed his desire that she should sit next him in the tent with the red flags; and lastly, it was a still more delightful thing to inspire jealousy and gloom in the breast of her faithful Joseph Flood, who had been released from his duties in time for the banquet, and who was now divided from his betrothed by half-a-dozen banqueters, glaring at her savagely, in silent indignation at her coquetry.

‘This is the fine gentleman from London that she talked about,’ he said to himself; and in his estimation Mr. Harcross suffered for all the sins of Weston Vallory. ‘I reckon she’ll scarcely open her lips to me all the afternoon, as long as she can get him to talk to.’

Miss Bond was conscious of her lover’s baleful glances, and improved the occasion, bringing all her fascinations to bear upon Mr. Harcross. The rustic feast would have been a slow business without this amusement. There was a great deal of talk, and still more laughter, inextinguishable laughter, at the feeblest and most threadbare jokes. The conversation was that of people who seemed to have no memory of the past, no consideration for the future—people existing as entirely in the present hour as if they had been bovine creatures without consciousness of yesterday. Their little jokes, their friendly facetiousness had a mechanical air, and seemed almost as wooden as the clumsy furniture of their cottages, handed down from generation to generation.

Mr. Harcross’s previous experience of this class had been entirely confined to the witness-box; but he found that, as in the witness-box, so were they in social life. ‘And yet I suppose there are fine characters, or the material for fine characters, among them,’ he thought in one of the pauses of his flirtation, as he contemplated the curious faces—some stolid and expressionless, some solemn and important, some grinning with a wooden grin. ‘I suppose there is the same proportion of intellect amongst a given number of these people as among the same number of men bred at Westminster and Oxford, if one could penetrate the outer husk, make due allowance for the differences of habit and culture, and get at the kernel within.

Or is the whole thing a question of blood, and mankind subject to the same laws which govern the development of a racehorse? I wonder how many dormant Bunyans and Burnses there may be in such an assembly as this.'

He had not much time for idle conjectures at this stage of the entertainment, for the toasts followed one another fast and furiously.

The loyal and ceremonial toasts, 'Sir Francis Clevedon, Lady Clevedon, and Miss Clevedon,' 'Colonel Davenant,' 'John Wort,' the steward, 'Mr. Holby,' the oldest and most important tenant, who had condescended to take a seat at this inferior table, when his rank entitled him to the best place at the superior board—all these and sundry other toasts were proposed in discreet and appropriate language by Hubert Harcross, with much secret weariness of spirit; and after every toast there was a long lumbering speech from some one in acknowledgment thereof. Mr. Harcross thought these people would never have done eating and drinking, that this health-proposing and thanks-returning would never come to an end. It was only half-past three when all was over, and he came out of the tent amidst the crowd with Jane Bond by his side; but it seemed to him as if the business had lasted a day and a night.

The local band had brayed itself breathless, and had retired to refresh itself in one of the tents; and now the band from London began to scrape its fiddles, and tighten the strings of its violoncello, and juggle mysteriously with little brass screws in its cornets, preparatory to performing the newest dance music for the rest of the afternoon.

'You must keep the last waltz for me,' said Mr. Harcross, casting himself on the grass at the feet of Miss Bond, who had seated herself on a bench under the trees. 'I feel as if I should not be equal to anything before that. What a relief it is to get into the open air and smell the pine-trees after the atmosphere of that tent! I felt the thermometer rising as it must have done in the Black Hole.'

'I don't know how to waltz,' replied Miss Bond, casting down her eyes. 'Father has always set his face against dancing; but I know the Lancers and the Caledonians. I learnt the figures out of a book.'

'Then we'll dance the Lancers,' Mr. Harcross said with a yawn, 'though it is the most idiotic performance ever devised for the abasement of mankind. What would Dog-ribs or Rocky Mountain Indians think of us, if they saw us dancing the Lancers? I believe the Dog-ribs have a dance of their own, by the way, a dance of amity, which is performed when friends meet after long severance, and which lasts two days at a stretch—a dance which, I take it, must be something of the Lancer or Caledonian species.'

He closed his eyes, and slumbered for a few minutes peacefully,

as he had often slept in law-courts and committee-rooms, while the band from London played a good honest country dance. He had no very precise idea of the duties of his stewardship, or what more might be required of him. He might be wanted to dance with the oldest woman of the party, or the youngest, or the prettiest, or the ugliest; but he was not inclined to give himself any farther trouble, and if Colonel Davenant had any new task to impose upon him, he would have to come and find him. There was a soothing sensation in the touch of that soft warm turf, in the odoriferous breathing of the pine-trees, stirred gently by a light summer wind. He thought of that other holiday afternoon at Clevedon, and a vision of Grace Redmayne rose before him in her pale young beauty. O God, if he could have opened his eyes to find himself at *her* feet! He thought of those two mournful lines which Southey quotes in the *Doctor*:

‘O, if in after life we could but gather  
The very refuse of our youthful hours!’

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

‘THOU ART THE MAN.’

At three o'clock the gentry went to luncheon in the great dining-room. They had been arriving from one o'clock upwards, and had spent the interval in sauntering about the upper part of the lawn, gazing from a respectful distance at the happy rustics very much as they might have done at animals in cages. It is possible that this amusement, even when eked out by conversation and croquet, and enlivened by the strains of the local band, may have somewhat palled upon the county families, and that the signal for the patrician banquet was a welcome relief. However this might be, the spirits of Sir Francis Clevedon's friends rose perceptibly in the banquet-hall. Incipient flirtations, which had only budded feebly on the lawn, burst into full blossom under the influence of sparkling wines, and that delightfully bewildering concert of voices produced by three-and-twenty different *tête-à-têtes* all going on at once. Georgie was eminently happy as she sat opposite her adored Francis, at this their first large party, for she felt that the fête was a success, and the eye of the county was upon them.

All the windows were open, and the cheering from the tents on the lawn mingled not unpleasantly with the merry confusion of voices within. It was a nice thing to know that those poor creatures who were not in society were for once enjoying themselves.

‘How strange it must seem to them to taste champagne!’ said the pretty Miss Stalman to her latest admirer; ‘I wonder if they are afraid it will go off and blow them up, like gunpowder.’

‘Don't know, I'm shaw,’ replied the gentleman; ‘but I should imagine they were hardly up to it. They'll take it for a superior

kind of beer. Champagne is a question of education, you see. There are people who believe implicitly in any wine that'll blow a cork out of a bottle.'

It was nearly three o'clock when Mr. Redmayne presented his card of admission at the south lodge, guarded to-day by an official from the Tunbridge police-office, who gave him a secondary ticket, printed on pink tissue paper, which was to admit him to the tenants' marquee.

'You'd better look sharp, sir,' said this official in a friendly tone; 'the tenants' dinner was to begin at three o'clock punctual.'

'I didn't mean to dine,' Richard answered dubiously; 'I only came to look about a little.'

'Not go in to dinner, Mr. Redmayne!' exclaimed the policeman, who knew the master of Brierwood by sight; 'and it's to be as fine a dinner as ever was eaten. Sure to goodness, you'd never be so foolish!'

Mr. Redmayne gave him a nod and went on, pledging himself to nothing. He thought he could stroll about on the outskirts of the crowd, and see as much of the festival as he cared to see, without joining in any of the festivities. But when he came to the lawn where the revelry was held, he found himself pounced upon by the ubiquitous Colonel, who was marshalling the tenants to their places, and who seized upon his pink-paper ticket and examined it eagerly.

'No. 53,' he exclaimed; 'the seats are all numbered. If you'll follow those ladies and gentlemen, sir, into that tent. Keep your ticket, the stewards are inside. Go on, sir, if you please.' And not caring to remonstrate, Richard Redmayne went the way Fate drifted him, and found himself presently seated at the board between two strangers, cheered by that inspiring melody, 'The Roast Beef of Old England.'

The dinner in the tenants' marquee did not differ materially from the humbler banquet of the villagers. The viands were of a more epicurean character: there were savoury jellies, and raised pies, and lobster salads, as a relief to the rounds and sirloins, and there were no such vulgarities as goose or sucking-pig. There were tartlets and cheese-cakes, and creams and blancmanges, and glowing pyramids of hot-house grapes and wall-fruit for the feminine banqueters, and there were sparkling wines and bottled ales in abundance. There was the same crescendo of multitudinous voices, and the jokes, though somewhat more refined than the humour of the villagers, had the same rustic flavour.

Richard Redmayne had of late found it easier to drink than to eat; so he did scanty justice to sirloin or savoury pie, but made up the deficiency by a considerable consumption of champagne, a wine he had learnt to drink in his gold-digging days, when the lucky



digger was wont to 'shout'—that is to say, pay the shot—for the refreshment of his comrades. He sat in moody silence, amidst all that talk and laughter, and drank and thought of his troubles.

They had been brought sharply home to him by the presence of John Wort, who sat at the bottom of the table, while Colonel Davenant took the chair at the top. He had not spoken to the steward since that night in his office, and the sight of him set him thinking of his wrongs with renewed bitterness.

'*He knew the man,*' he said to himself. '*He brought him to my house. But for him my little girl might be with me to-day.*'

It was a bitter thought, not to be drowned in the vintage of Perrier or Moet. The man went on drinking, uncheered by the wine, growing gloomier, rather, as he drank.

The toasts had not yet begun. Sir Francis was to bid his guests welcome before that ceremony was entered upon. It was about half-past four, when there was a little buzz and movement at the entrance of the marquee, and a great many people stood up, as if a monarch had appeared among them.

Richard Redmayne looked up listlessly enough, not having the keen personal interest of the tenants, to whom this man's favour was to be as the sun itself, diffusing light and heat. He looked up, and saw a tall slim young man coming slowly along on the opposite side of the table, stopping to speak to one, and to shake hands with another, and ready with a pleasant greeting for all; a darkly handsome face, smiling kindly, while all the assembly stood at gaze.

After that one careless upward glance, Richard Redmayne sat staring at the new-comer, motionless, nay almost breathless, as a man of stone. Had not those very lineaments been bitten into the tablet of his mind with the corroding acid of hate? The face was a face which he had seen in many of his dreams of late. The face of a man with whom he had grappled, hand to hand and foot to foot, in many a visionary struggle—a countenance he had hardly hoped to look upon in the flesh. It was the very face which he had pored upon so often, in that foolish toy, his dead girl's locket. He had the thing in his breast to-day, fastened to his watch-ribbon.

'What! was *he* the man?' he said to himself at last, drawing a long slow breath.

Was this the man—Sir Francis Clevedon? In that sudden light of conviction, Richard Redmayne began to wonder that he had never guessed as much as this: the man who came to Brierwood, recommended and guaranteed by John Wort: the man who had free access to Clevedon, and whom Wort had seemed anxious in every respect to oblige. He remembered that stormy interview in the little office at Kingsbury, and John Wort's endeavour to shield the delinquent. Yes, the murder was out. This hero of the hour, upon whom all the world was smiling, was the destroyer of his child.



The savage thirst for vengeance which took possession of him on this discovery was tempered by no restraining influence. For years past all his thoughts and dreams and desires had tended to one deadly end. Whatever religious sentiments he had cherished in his youth—and very few young men with innocent surroundings are irreligious—had been withered by this soul-blasting grief. Nor had his Australian experience been without an evil effect upon his character. It had made a naturally careless disposition reckless to lawlessness. Of all the consequences which might tread upon the heels of any desperate act of his he took no heed. He reasoned no more than a savage might have reasoned; but having, as he thought, found his enemy, his whole being was governed by but one consideration, as to the mode and manner of that settlement which must come between them.

He sat in his place and meditated this question, while Sir Francis Clevedon made his way round the table. It was a somewhat protracted journey, for the Baronet had something particular to say to a great many of his tenants; he had set his heart upon holding a better place in their estimation than his father had held, on being something more to them than an absorbent of rents. He talked to the matrons, and complimented the daughters; and had a good deal to say about harvest and hopping, and the coming season of field sports, to the fathers and sons. What a herd of sycophants those people seemed to Richard Redmayne's jaundiced soul as they paid their honest homage to the proprietor of their homesteads, and what a hypocrite the squire who received their worship!

'Does he mean to break the hearts of any of *their* daughters?' he thought, as he saw the matrons smiling up at him, the maidens downcast and blushing. Sir Francis was close behind him presently, and paused for a moment to glance at that one sullen figure which did not move as he passed—only for a moment, there were so many to speak to. The man's potations had been a trifle too deep, perhaps.

The man drank deeper before the banquet was over. He went on drinking in his gloomy silent way, during that lengthy ceremonial of toast-proposing. Sir Francis had stood at the end of the table by John Wort, and made a cheery little speech to set them going, and then had slipped away, leaving the Colonel, who loved all manner of speechification, in his glory. How he hammered at the toasts, heaping every hyperbolical virtue upon the head of his subject!—that honourable, noble-hearted, worthy English farmer, Mr. A., whom they all knew and esteemed, and whom it was a proud thing to know, and an impossible thing not to esteem, and who, &c. &c.

'As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm;  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.'

What little gushes of sentiment welled from the kindly Colonel's lips; what scraps of poetry more or less appropriate, but always applauded to the echo; what swelling adjectives rolled off his fluent tongue; and how the champagne corks flew and the honest brown sherry—a sound sustaining wine—shrank in the decanters!

Richard Redmayne sat it all out, though the talk and laughter, the cheering and jolly-good-fellowing, made little more than a mere Babel sound in his ears. He sat on, not caring to draw people's attention upon him by an untimely departure; sat on drinking brandy-and-water, and having no more fellowship with the feasters than if he had been the skull at an Egyptian banquet.

At last the revelry, or this stage of the revelry, was over, and the tenants left their tent. Dancing had been in full progress for some time among the humbler guests, and the wide lawn in the evening sunlight presented a pretty picture of village festivity: the music of an old-fashioned country dance was sounding gaily, a long line of figures threading the needle—the women in bright-coloured gowns and ribbons, the men with gaudy neckerchiefs and light waistcoats—all moving, all full of life and colour, the low western sun shining on them, the joy-bells of Kingsbury church ringing a vesper peal.

Sir Francis was standing on the outskirts of the lawn, with his wife on his arm, watching the dancers. They moved slowly away as Richard Redmayne crossed the grass on his way towards them. His quick eye had seen that hated figure, and he went across the lawn intending to speak to his enemy, even in that place and at that time.

His wrath had kept for years, and had strengthened with his nursing; but he was not a man to delay the time of reckoning by so much as an hour. He had no clear idea of what he meant to say, nor had his libations in the tent conduced to clearness of brain; but he knew that he meant to denounce Francis Clevedon before the face of all the world.

'I'll let them know what a noble gentleman they've got for their landlord,' he said to himself. 'I'll stop all their humbug and palaver, and make them sing to a different tune. I should think the fathers that have only daughters will turn their backs upon him, anyhow.'

He followed Sir Francis and his wife at a respectful distance, as they strolled slowly towards the house, biding his time but meaning to come up with them presently. They did not go in by the chief entrance, but by an iron wicket leading into the garden, which lay at one side of the Hall, and extended for a long way behind it. They had disappeared behind the angle of the house by the time Mr. Redmayne came to this gate. He entered the garden, however, and went round to the back of the house.

The library was on this side of Clevedon Hall. Its five windows opened on the grass-plots and flower-beds, and commanded a view of the fish-pond, where there were gold and silver fish in abundance now — happy fish, which were fed every morning by Georgie's hand. A huge gray cockatoo — a wedding present from the Colonel to his daughter — was screaming on its perch before an open glass door. This was the only open door Richard Redmayne could see, as he cast a quick look along the house. He crossed the grass-plot with a rapid foot-step, and looked into the room.

After the vivid sunshine out of doors the Clevedon library had a dusky look. The walls had been lined by Clevedons of a more studious temper than the baronets of later generations. From floor to ceiling the room was filled with books, and massive oaken bookcases, seven feet high, stood out from the walls, dividing the chamber into various nooks and recesses, or pens rather, where a student might pore over some ancient volume in the strictest solitude, although the centre of the room were ever so well occupied. It seemed a darksome apartment to Richard Redmayne as he peered in, with his back to the garden and the sunlight. Those walls of brown-backed folios and quartos, enlivened here and there by a row of duodecimos in faded crimson morocco, or a little batch of octavos in vellum, had a sober air that was almost gloomy. There was none of the costliness and luxury of binding which render modern libraries things of beauty. The volumes had been collected in an age when it was the fashion to make the outsides of books as repulsive as possible; when knowledge was for the privileged classes, and the solemn muses of history and poetry, and the graver geniuses of philosophy and science, disdained to make themselves attractive by meretricious arts in the way of outward adornment.

Richard Redmayne gave a hasty glance round the room, and thought that it was 'unked;' and then seeing a white dress near a distant door, which he took to be Lady Clevedon's, stepped boldly in.

The lady by the door turned at the sound of the farmer's foot-step on the uncarpeted oak floor. It was Georgie, who had been in the act of leaving the room as the intruder entered. She looked at him with a little surprise, but without alarm. It was scarcely strange that unknown figures should be wandering about to-day.

'You are looking for some one, I suppose,' she said, with her pretty smile.

'Yes, I am looking for Sir Francis Clevedon.'

'He was here scarcely a minute ago; but I don't think you can see him just yet. He has gone to the billiard-room with General Cheviot. Is it anything very particular you have to say to him?'

She fancied the strange man must be one of the tenants, who wanted his roof repaired, perhaps, or new pigsties, and who chose this inappropriate occasion for the preferment of his request.



'It is something very particular,' said Richard, in a strange voice. 'I never thought to see Sir Francis Clevedon's face as I have seen it to-day.'

The strangeness of the words, as well as of the man's tone and manner, startled her. He was deadly pale, too; she could see that, although he stood with his back to the light.

He had been taking too much champagne, perhaps; that was the most natural explanation of the business. What a horrible situation, to be left alone in this great room with a dreadful tipsy farmer! Poor Georgie gave a little shudder, and moved hastily towards the door.

'I will send some one to tell my husband you want to see him,' she said, in a conciliating tone, 'if you'll be good enough to sit down and wait.'

'Don't go, Lady Clevedon. Perhaps I'd better tell you my story. Women are supposed to be compassionate; and I have heard so much of your goodness. You don't mind listening to me for a few minutes, do you?'

Georgie hesitated. No, this was no tipsy farmer. The man's earnestness at once interested and alarmed her.

'I never meant to come to Clevedon to-day. I almost wish, for your sake, I hadn't come. It was my fate, I suppose, that sent me here, or those devilish joy-bells clanging all the morning that drove me. Anyhow I came; came to find the man I have been looking for, on and off, since my daughter died.'

He stood with his hand resting on a carved oaken reading-desk, looking down at Lady Clevedon, who had seated herself a little way off, thinking it wisest to seem calm and self-possessed. What if the man were some maniac who had stolen in among the guests? There was much in his manner to suggest such a fear—no hint of violence, but rather an unnatural calmness, which was still more appalling.

'Looking for him, on and off,' he repeated, 'since my daughter died. You have heard of me perhaps, Lady Clevedon; my name is Richard Redmayne.'

'Yes, I have heard of you.'

'And you have heard my story, I suppose?'

'I have been told you had a daughter whom you lost, and whose death affected you severely.'

'What, was that all? Did you hear no speculations as to the cause of her death; no hints of a seduction; a foolish trusting girl tempted away from her home?'

'No,' Georgie answered gently; 'I have heard nothing but the mere fact of your daughter's early death. But if the story is indeed so sad a one as you seem to say, I am sincerely sorry for you.'

She thought that the man had been drinking, until the recollection of his wrongs and sorrows had in some measure affected his

brain. She was very patient with him therefore, willing even to listen sympathisingly to any statement of his wrongs, whereby he might relieve an overburdened breast.

'Who said my daughter was disgraced?' he exclaimed, taking up her words with an indignant air. 'Not I. God would not suffer that. She was too pure to be the victim of a scoundrel. Death came between her and her tempter. But her death be upon his head!'

'I can't quite understand the story,' faltered Georgie; 'but I am sorry for you with all my heart.'

'Be sorry for yourself, Lady Clevedon; for you are the wife of a villain.'

O, the man was mad evidently, a wretched creature whom grief had made distraught. Her first thought had been right. She glanced towards the door with a little look of terror, and rose from her chair, her first impulse being to fly. Richard Redmayne laid his hand upon her arm.

'Stop,' he said, 'I want you to answer a question. What do you think of a man who came to my house under a false name, came to a neighbourhood where he should have come as master and land-owner; came on the sly, pretending to be a stranger; came into an honest man's house and blighted the life of his child; tempted her away from home, under a lying promise of marriage—I have my dear girl's letter to prove that—and never meant to marry her; took her to a house that he had taken under another false name; and when she died in his arms—struck dead by the discovery of his falsehood, as I know she was—within a quarter of an hour of her entrance under that roof, lied again, and swore she was his sister; then buried her in a nameless grave, far away from her home, and left her doting father to find out, how best he might, what had become of his only child? What do you think of such a man as that, Lady Clevedon?'

'What can I think,' said Georgie, who had grown very pale, 'except that he was a villain?'

'A most consummate villain, eh?'

'A most consummate villain.'

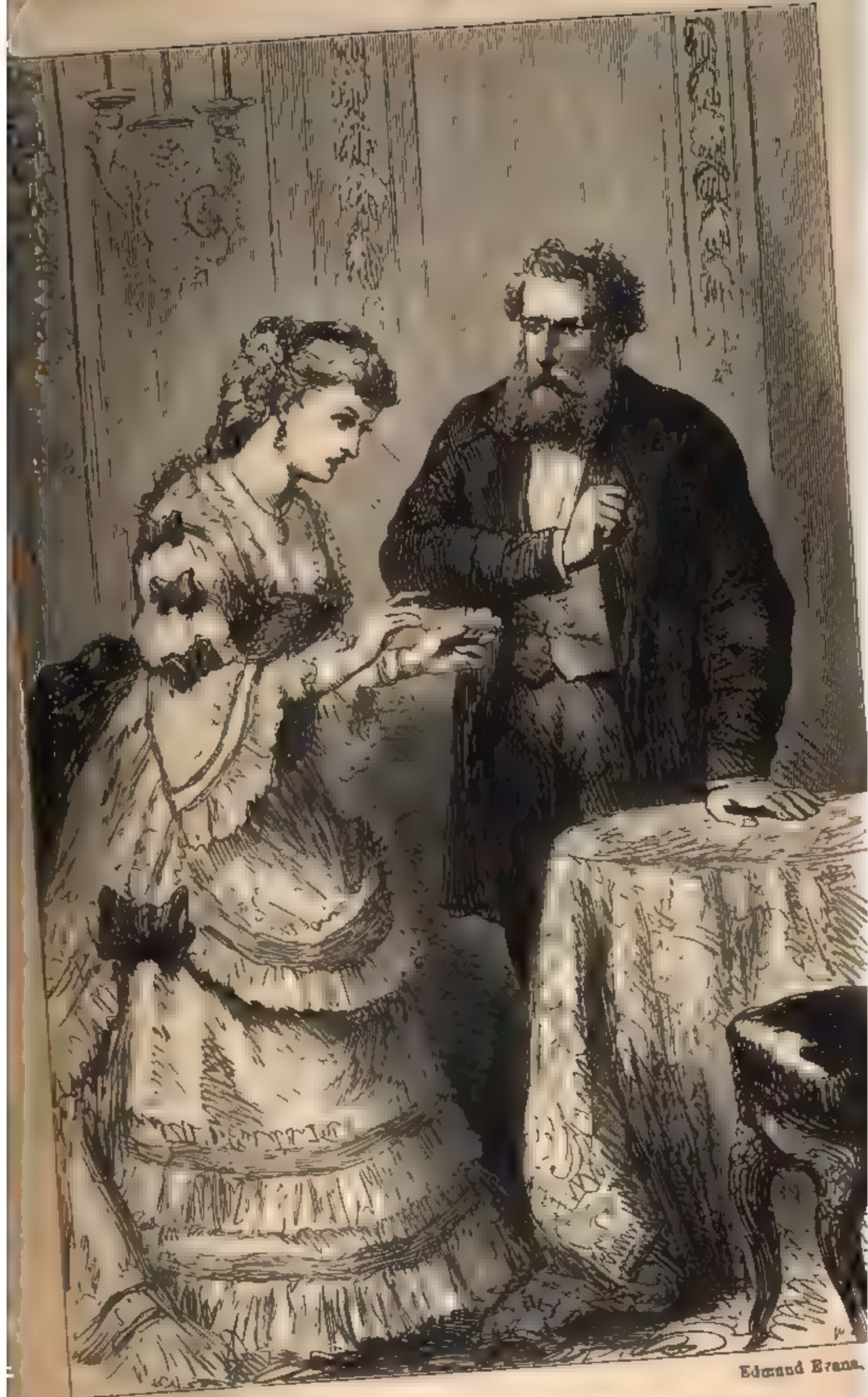
'I am glad you are honest enough to admit that,' said Richard Redmayne, flinging Grace's locket upon the table, with the false back open, and the portrait exposed, 'although the man is your husband.'

'What do you mean, sir?' cried Georgie. 'You must be mad to say such a thing.'

'Look at that,' he said, pointing to the miniature; 'whose face is that, do you think?'

Alas for the fidelity of portraiture! The photograph of Hubert Walgrave Harcross, improved and beautified by the miniature painter,





Edmund Evans.

Louis Haard, del

THE PORTRAIT OF GRACE REDWAYNE'S BETRAYER.



every mark of care and thought and age eliminated, much more nearly resembled the elegant baronet than the studious lawyer. Georgie's heart began to beat wildly, and her hand shook so much, that she could scarcely lift that fatal trinket. She did take it up, however, and looked at it with a long despairing gaze.

'This is my husband's portrait, certainly,' she said, in slow tremulous tones; 'but what does that prove? Do you suppose that *anything* you can say would make me think ill of him?'

'O, I daresay you will stand by him whatever he may be,' cried Mr. Redmayne, with a sardonic laugh. 'Besides, it all happened before he married you, and I suppose with a woman that doesn't count. I've heard that some women even like a man better for having been a scoundrel. No, I don't suppose you will think the worse of him for having broken my Grace's heart.'

'How dare you talk to me like that? If I thought—if I could for a moment believe that he had ever done so base a thing, ever been so false and cruel! But I am foolish and wicked to tremble like this. As if he ever could have done anything base, as if he could have been a coward and a deceiver! How dare you come here to try and frighten me with this senseless accusation?'

'You have your husband's picture in your hand—the locket he sent my daughter.'

'Do you think I will believe that?' cried Georgie, with a desperate courage, ready to defy this man—nay, Fate itself—rather than acknowledge that her idol could err. 'How can I tell by what means you came by this locket? You may have found it somewhere, and invented this hateful story.'

'It was a love-gift to my daughter; there are plenty who know that. There is a secret spring, you see—the portrait is not meant for common eyes—quite a lover's trick. And this man was false and secret in all he did.'

'The picture proves nothing,' Georgie said, with recovered firmness, 'and your accusation is as ridiculous as it is offensive. My husband only came to England last year; until that time he had lived entirely abroad.'

'Were you with him all the time, that you can answer for him so boldly? People come backwards and forwards sometimes, even without telling all their friends about it. I have been to Australia and back twice within the last seven years. That man came to Brierwood under a false name, and amused himself looking about his own estate, I suppose, on the sly; and when he got tired of that, amused himself with breaking my daughter's heart. He came recommended by John Wort, the steward; and when I wanted to hunt him down, John Wort stood between him and my vengeance. Fate sent me here to-day, or I might never have known the name of my daughter's murderer.'



'I will not believe it,' repeated Georgie, but this time in a helpless hopeless tone, that was very pitiful. O God! the case seemed made out so fully, and that miniature in her hand was so strong a corroboration of the miserable story. What motive could this man have for torturing her with a fabrication? Were the accusation ever so false—and false it must be—the accuser spoke in good faith.

She put her hands before her face, trying to be calm, to quiet the fast-growing confusion of her brain.

'There is some mistake,' she said at last. 'I am very sorry for you; but, believe me, you are completely wrong in your suspicion of my husband. If I do not know every detail of his past life—and I think I do, for he has told me so much about himself—I know, at least, that he is good and honourable, utterly incapable of a base or cowardly action. I should be most unworthy of his love and trust, if I could think ill of him. I cannot tell how this mistake may have arisen, or how you came by that locket; but I can say—yes, with the utmost confidence—that my husband is guiltless of any wrong against you or your daughter.'

She raised her head proudly, looking Francis Clevedon's slanderer full in the face. Even if he were guilty, it was her duty to defend him; but she could not think him guilty. Circumstances might lie, but not Francis Clevedon.

Richard Redmayne surveyed her with a half-contemptuous pity.

'Of course you'll stand by him,' he said; 'stand me out that he wasn't there, that the portrait you've got in your hand is somebody else's portrait. Women are always ready to do that sort of thing. I'm very sorry for you, Lady Clevedon; but I mean to have some kind of reckoning with this truthful and honourable husband of yours. I mean to let the world hereabouts know what kind of a gentleman Sir Francis Clevedon is. Where can I find him?'

'You are not going to talk about this wretched business before everybody—to make a scene?' cried Georgie, with a woman's natural horror of open scandal.

'I mean to have it out with Sir Francis whenever and wherever I see him. Give me back that locket, if you please.'

He took it from Georgie's hand, and tied it to his watch-ribbon.

'You cannot see Sir Francis this evening; it is quite impossible.'

'I'll find that out for myself,' he said, passing her, and going out of the room.

Georgie followed him into the hall, where he paused, looking about him with a puzzled air. A couple of men-servants were lounging by the open door, and Georgie felt herself safe. If necessary, she would order them to turn this man out of the house. She would *do it* rather than see her husband assailed in the midst of his friends. Who could tell what mischief such an accusation might do him in

the estimation of his little world, however baseless the charge might be?

Mr. Redmayne went up to one of the servants, and asked whether Sir Francis was still in the house.

'No, sir; my master went back to the grounds just now with General Cheviot,' answered the man, looking at Richard Redmayne's pale face and loosened neckerchief with some astonishment. He was not one of the house visitors, and had clearly no business in that place; yet he looked too respectable a person to have any sinister motive for his intrusion—a gentleman who had been overcome by bitter beer or champagne, perhaps, and had wandered this way in mere purposeless meandering.

'How long is it since he went out?' asked Richard impatiently. 'What do you mean by "just now"?'

'Ten minutes, if you want to be so uncommon exact about it,' replied the retainer, with an offended air. 'And, I say, if you're one of the tenants, this ain't the place as you're invited to. There's the tenants' marquee; that's your place.'

Rick Redmayne passed him without deigning to notice this reproof. If Francis Clevedon had gone back to the grounds, it was his business to follow him. It mattered little where they met, so long as they met speedily.

Georgie had remained by the library door, almost hidden by the deep embrasure. She came out into the hall when Richard Redmayne was gone.

'Send some one to look for your master immediately,' she said to one of the men, 'or go yourself, if that will save time, and tell him I want to speak to him at once in my own room.'

'Yes, my lady; perhaps I'd better go myself.'

'Yes, yes, I think you had. And be sure you tell Sir Francis I wish to speak to him at once.'

She stood in the porch for a little while, watching the footman as he crossed the lawn, making his way in and out among the company with tolerable celerity. She watched him till he was out of sight, and then went slowly up the broad oak staircase to the room with the oriel window, and flung herself on her knees before her pet arm-chair, and buried her head in the silken pillows, and sobbed as if her heart were broken. Yet she told herself over and over again that, come what might, she would never believe him guilty. But what if, when she told him Richard Redmayne's accusation, as she meant to tell it, word for word—what if he should admit the justice of the charge, strike her dumb by the confession of his infamy? He infamous, he a traitor, he who had so often told her that his past life did not hold act or thought that he cared to keep secret from her! He stand before her unabashed, in the character of a cold-blooded seducer! The thing was not possible. And then she re-



remembered the face that had smiled at her in the locket—his face, and no other. No thought of Hubert Harcross, and that notorious likeness between the two men, ever flashed across her brain. Her mind was too full of that one image. Love narrows the universe to a circle hardly wider than a wedding-ring. She could not look beyond the husband of her choice and the shadow that had come between them.

She rose from her knees at last, after vainly endeavouring to pray, and went to the open window, keeping herself hidden behind the silken curtain, and looking out across the idle crowds, with that brazen dance music sounding in her ears—the slender thread of the last street song spun out to attenuation in the last popular waltz.

He would deny, he would explain, she told herself again and again, angry with her own weak spirit for wavering ever so little, yet not able altogether to overcome a sickening sense of fear. If he would only come, and hear her strange story, and set everything right with a few words!

‘He has but to look me in the face, and tell me how deeply I have wronged him, and my heart will be at rest,’ she said to herself, straining her eyes in their search for that one familiar figure.

She could not see him, and he did not come to her. She would have gone in quest of him herself, but that would have been to run the risk of missing him altogether, should he have received her message, and be on his way to her room. In that large house, and in those crowded grounds, it was so easy to miss any one. No, it was wiser to wait; and she waited, looking at the villagers dancing in the sunset, at the lights beginning to shine out one by one among the trees, as the evening shadows deepened, looking at them without seeing them.

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E. Wagner, del.

P. O.

TO-MORROW.

## TO-MORROW

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To-NIGHT she sail'd o'er windy seas,  
Under a star-enamell'd dome ;  
' I thank thee, Lord, with low-bent knees,  
Baby to-morrow sees its home.'

As fruit is hid by tender leaves,  
Her arms embraced her little child.  
To-morrow!—ah, trust which but deceives,  
Hope, on fruition's marge beguiled !

What fortunes in men's short lives fall,  
From bud to fruit, from stalk to grain !  
She may not hear its lisping call,  
Not fondle its feeble feet again.

No more, in all the circling hours,  
The mother's hands, which never tire,  
May round its head with first spring flowers,  
Or rock it by the winter fire.

' My sweet, and all the world to me !'  
Touch'd by some cold sad thought, she cried,  
Half wondering, nor turn'd to see  
Death standing silent by her side ;

Who loosed the storm-fiend from his lair,  
And bade him lash the bristling wave,  
And heard a voice, else lost in air,  
' Help, Lord in heaven ! my darling save !'

Vain voice ! ere Morn in the orient met,  
Peering from rosy portals, Day,  
The stone on both their mouths was set  
No mortal hand may roll away.

JAMES MEW.

# IMAGINARY LONDON

A delusive Directory

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

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## VIII. SAHARA-GARDENS AND BEHEMOTH-GATE.

I HAPPENED to be walking one forenoon along Brain-street, E.C., towards Floodgate, and literally thinking of nothing at all, like the gentleman in the ballad ; for I was expected to write a leading article for the morrow's issue of the *Steam Whistle*, a journal with which I have been long connected, and I could think of nothing at all as a peg on which that same leader could be hung. I looked in at the windows of the *Punch* office, but there were no ideas for sale *there*. The editor, no doubt, in Whitefriars hard by, wanted them all for himself. I stared at the caricatures in the *étalage* of the stationer's shop which was once Mr. Bogue's publishing warehouse ; and I halted opposite the office of the *Tattenham-corner Chronicle* to read the telegram (just wafered up by a small boy of sporting appearance) to the effect that the Chopshire Stakes had been won by Buffalo, Rhinoceros coming in second, and Quagga making a bad third. *That* announcement didn't help me much. It was a very wet and very muddy forenoon, and across the blank disc of my mind there suddenly flashed an arrowy suggestion, to the effect that a neat paragraph concerning the antiquity of umbrellas might form a fitting exordium to the required essay ; but I was fain to remember that I had recently exhausted the history of umbrellas in connection with the successful candidate at the Roughborough election having sheltered himself behind a Sangster's best from a shower of brickbats and cabbage-stumps hurled at him by a patriotic band of non-electors. Blankness reigned again in awful autocracy ; and of all the block-heads pacing Brain-street, E.C., on that particular day, I was, it may be, for the nonce the most idiotic.

You know the great banking-house of Obverse, Reverse, Milledrim, and Co., of which her Grace the Duchess of Tanaquil (old Sir John Milledrim's daughter and coheiress : there has not been an Obverse or a Reverse in the firm for centuries) is now the senior partner. Obverse's bank has always attractions for me when I am in an idle and 'moony' mood ; it looks so black, so strong, so wealthy, does the old house. Trapbois, the money scrivener of Alsatia, was a customer in King Jamie's time ; that is to say, he kept just enough cash at Obverse's to form a working balance, on the strength of which he could get discounted, at five per cent, the little bills which he had 'done' for Lord Nigel Oliphant and other members of the no-



bility and gentry at sixty per cent. Nell Gwynne too, if I remember aright, had an account at the Brain-street goldsmith's—banking and *bijouterie* went hand-in-hand in those days—and on several occasions obtained monetary advances on such tangible securities as forks and spoons, and toilet ornaments of the precious metals. Well, I was sauntering lazily enough by Obverse's, still thinking of nothing at all—the nonentity in question was the balance at *my* banker's—when I ran against my old friend and schoolmate Charles Chequerley. Stay: 'twas Charles who ran against me. I was 'loafing,' and he, as usual, was in a desperate hurry.

I have known Charles Chequerley—well, ever so many years. We were intimates when this old hat was new, and long before this old heart put on an epidermis of hippopotamus-hide. We two have paidled in the burn together, and have pulled the gowans fine, which belonged to the proprietor of a market-garden next door to our school; and an awful row did he raise on the subject of his gowans. Charles has been his pint-stoup to my pint-stoup, and we have had a right good willie waucht, and done a variety of other ridiculous things in early youth and manhood. Charles was remarkable in his scholastic days for giving away his pocket-money in the most lavish manner early in the 'half,' and then borrowing the petty cash of his school-fellows. If you pressed him for repayment, he thrashed you; for he was a strong boy and a handsome, and though perfectly unscrupulous, exceedingly generous and deservedly popular. He was a wonderful arithmetician, and 'did' the sums for all the class; keeping, besides, most accurate accounts of his financial transactions with us in a ledger, waste-book, cash-book, and day-book, and in a fine Roman hand; but when he went home for the holidays, it was generally discovered that Mrs. Crupp, at the cake and sweetstuff shop opposite, had a tremendous score against him; and I even heard that during the last half he positively borrowed seventeen-and-sixpence from a pretty domestic who attended to the linen and small-tooth-comb department of our education. True to his financial instincts, he insisted on giving this young lady—Jane Rigby was her name, and she stole bread-and-jam for us with the greatest dexterity and dispatch—an I O U representing the amount of his indebtedness. A rumour ran among us that Jane subsequently took legal proceedings in the county court on this security, but was nonsuited in consequence of the I O U's being somewhat combined with a promise of marriage in poetry. I daresay the much-mooted document was only a valentine; for boys (and girls) *do* exaggerate so. Charles's father was reputed to be somebody 'in the City,' and to be possessed of enormous wealth. Fond even at that early age of rotund verbosity of diction, I remember writing home to my sister that our head boy was the son of the Governor and Company of the Bank of England: I think I added, vaguely associating the Church of England with Thread-

needle-street, 'as by law established.' Charles's banking prestige ended by his papa being bankrupt. He omitted to pay two 'halves' schooling to Mr. Bogryne, our instructor; retired to Malmö in Sweden; married his deceased wife's sister, and otherwise comported himself in an immoral and irresponsible manner.

I lost sight of Charles Chequerley for many years; but one day (I was much concerned with theatrical matters just then) he sent me (from De Beauvoir-square, Hackney) the manuscript of a five-act comedy, asking me to use my interest with the London managers in order to obtain its immediate representation. If it wasn't in my way, he added, would I send him orders for two for the Olympic, to see Robson, any night except Saturday? It was not in my way, so I sent him back the manuscript and the orders, and saw no more of him till one foggy November morning, when, happening to have some business in the Court of Bankruptcy, Basinghall-street, I met Charles on the remarkably filthy staircase of the tribunal in question. He was very shabby; wore spectacles; informed me that he was an accountant in Pope's Head-alley, and offered to assist me in 'getting my figures together,' if I had 'anything to file.' He was remarkable, he told me, for making 'private expenditure shipshape;' and I could not help thinking, in that connection, on his transactions with Mrs. Crupp of the cake-shop, and Jane Rigby of the small-tooth-comb department. Let me see: where was it that I next met Charles?—was it at Riga, where he was agent for the Livonian bondholders? No, stay; it was at Madrid. Charles was travelling in great state and splendour. He had obtained a concession for the construction of a railway from the Escorial to the Alhambra, passing through the Irvarambla and the island of Barataria (whose governor, indeed, Don Sanchez de Pança y Asno y Borrico, was his great friend and backer); and was, besides, financial manager to the Universal Development Company of Andalusia and the Asturian mines, an organisation which proposed to buy up, for the next five-and-twenty years, all the orange groves between Seville and Granada, all the cork and chestnut forests in the Sierra Morena, and all the sherry *bodegas* in Cadiz and Puerto Santa Maria. The Universal Company came to serious grief within six months, and during the process of winding-up some very ugly remarks were made by the vice-chancellor concerning poor Charles. I heard of him afterwards as secretary to the Hospital for Chilblains; as collector to the fund for erecting a memorial to Prince Le Boo; and as agent to the Midnight Morality through the Intermediary of Muffins Society; and then I was without intelligence of him for a very long time, as frequently happens in the case of friends whose interests are financial, and whose careers are chequered. It was quite a toss as to where Charles might be. Quaffing champagne, haply, at Hombourg; or supping skilly, perchance, in Holloway gaol.

However, he was in Brain-street that muddy forenoon, hurrying out of Obverse, Reverse, and Milledrim's banking-house to his brougham, which was standing at the kerb, and consequently blocking up the traffic. Charles was as large as life; nay, a great deal larger than his living presentment had been on the last occasion of my meeting him. He had gained in flesh, and, as it seemed to me, in stature; he was splendidly clad, and a number of chains, rings, and other trinkets were glittering and glancing about his person. Things were evidently going well with my old schoolfellow, and that fact perhaps induced in my mind the impression that he had grown: why not? A dear Bohemian friend of mine, and who from his cradle to his grave was a martyr to a combination of diseases, used to declare that, sick as he might be, the possession of a ten-pound note would always restore him to health. An accumulation of crisp bank-paper seemed to have produced a similar effect upon Charles Chequerley: much money had made him tall and stout and handsome. He was red-haired, rather repulsively so in boyhood, and freckled; and I well remember his scraggy, ragged red whiskers in the days when he was an accountant in Pope's Head-alley; but his locks were now of a warm auburn, bordering on chestnut, and, with his beard and moustache, well kempt and glossy. You see that money will do so many things. It will purchase for you all the treasures of Messrs. Atkinson's and Mr. Rimmel's shops; it will bring you in commercial communication with Mrs. S. A. Allen: you may be *sans* eyes, *sans* nose, *sans* teeth, *sans* arms, *sans* legs, *sans* liver, *sans* everything almost; but with money nearly all your physical deficiencies can be supplied. There is but one thing that money will not do: it will not weigh up the anchor which the grisly mariners at the bow cast—how the chains rattle!—into the haven of Death.

I glanced at Chequerley's brougham. It was crammed inside with letters and papers, parliamentary blue-books, despatch-boxes, and what-not; but as to its exterior, the perfection of style was undeniable. Beautifully-matched pair of bright bays; little black waterproofs on their backs to guard them from the damp chill; coachman in orthodox buckskins and 'pickle-jars' (brown-topped boots) and dogskin gloves (eight-and-a-quarter), which you might be certain had not cost less than three-and-ninepence a pair at Thresher and Glennie's. Dark-panelled brougham, quietly picked out with magenta, and Charlie's crest—a candle, burning at both ends, proper, with the motto, *Alieni appetens sui profusus*.

He grasped me by both hands (there never was such an affectionate creature), and looking at me through his beamy spectacles, which were gold-rimmed now, asked me what I had been doing with myself these last five hundred years. I answered that I had been going on in my usual manner, working very hard as a day-labourer; whereupon he dug me sportively in the ribs, and remarked, 'Droll

dog! always full of your fun. We know all about your "work." Billiards, eh? Behind the scenes, lobster suppers, broiled bones, influence of the press, ha!

There was never any use arguing with Charles Chequerley, so I let him have his way.

'Chopped yet?' he resumed (telegraphing meanwhile some instructions to his coachman). 'Come and chop at the Croesus Club in Broad Arrow-street. It's the only first-rate club where you can chop a man. Too early to chop, eh? So it is; but I've been up since five in the morning. Glass of dry sherry, any way, at the "Cheese"? Lampet'—this was to the coachman—'drive to the Junior Pickles and Preservative Club in Pall Mall, and wait for me. I shall take a hansom from the half-yearly meeting of the South-Western of Tartarus Railway. And, Lampet, give me some silver, will you?'

With a keen remembrance of our old schooldays I watched the coachman, after long fumbling in the pockets of his buckskins, and with a somewhat rueful expression of countenance, produce two half-crowns, which he handed to his master. But, after all, there was nothing extraordinary in the fact of a man of large means requiring small change on an emergency. Had not Charles just come out of a bank? Well, you could scarcely expect him to draw a cheque for five shillings; and I remember a very worldly-wise friend once telling me that he never knew a millionaire who had ready-money in his pocket enough to pay for a cab. 'And, more than that,' my sage acquaintance was wont to continue, 'don't you be fool enough to lend a rich man any silver when he wants any; no, not even if Rothschild were the asker. He'll never pay you back. How can you expect a capitalist to trouble himself about such trifles as half-crowns?' So I was very glad, on the whole, that Charles had borrowed the small change from Mr. Lampet on the box, and not from me. Otherwise I very much fear that I should have been hopelessly mulct in the sum of two glasses of dry sherry at the 'Cheese,' and in the cab-fare to and from the South-Western of Tartarus Railway Company's offices to boot.

As Charles stepped into the hansom he was good enough to make me promise to dine with him on the ensuing Wednesday—just a week thence—at his 'crib' in Skye Park. 'It'll be a biggish dinner,' he went on, 'and Mrs. C. will send you the customary paste-board to your club. War-paint, lots of people, music in the evening, and all that kind of thing. I'm doing business on rather a heavy scale just now. After that we'll have a quiet little snack some day at the Junior Pickles, and talk about old times. Remember, Wednesday next. But you'll get the card. I shall make out that you're no end of a swell full of anecdote; *so please be as funny as you can.*' And away went Charles in his hansom.

A day or two afterwards the club-porter handed me an enormous

envelope, with a coat-of-arms on the seal so large and so imposing in its heraldic hieroglyphy, that ere I broke the wax I fancied it must be an invitation to dine at the Mansion-House, or with the Worshipful Company of Boot-Clickers at the very least. It proved, however, to be the 'customary pasteboard,' in which Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cross Chequerley requested the honour of my company to dinner, at eight o'clock, at 999 Sahara-gardens, Behemoth-gate, Skye Park, W. The address nearly took my breath away; but I looked it up subsequently in Boyle's *Court Guide*, and found my friend duly scheduled as

'CHEQUERLEY, Charles Cross, Esq., F.I.Z.S., Consul-General for Macassarine Republic, 999 Sahara-gardens, Behemoth-gate, Skye Park, W.; Pactolus Chambers, Old Broad Arrow-street, E.C.; Watermail Court, Bucks; and Glen Bawbee, Kyleshire, N.B.'

'Charles Chequerley,' I said musingly, sticking the enormous copper-plate-engraved placard in my chimney-glass, 'is certainly doing business on a heavy scale just now.'

I duly presented myself at eight o'clock on the appointed Wednesday evening; but it was not without infinite pains on the part of a not wholly unintelligent cabman, and the employment of some perhaps justifiably strong language (through the trap in the roof, and aided by an umbrella), that we reached Sahara-gardens, Behemoth-gate. The district was seemingly at the end of the world of the Western postal district; and was much nearer the extremity of the Royal Gardens at Fullbottomedwigton than Skye Park. Passing policemen, when appealed to by my distracted Jehu, informed him that Sahara was one o' them new blocks of houses about a mile beyond the turnpike; and cabmen on the stand, hailed with a view of eliciting farther *renseignements*, would reply that it was straight ahead close to the new church, over a 'arf-crown fare from the Hadamantine Harch. But there seemed to be fifty new churches between the 'Hadamantine Harch' and a public-house under the sign of the Leviathan, which adjoined the site of a defunct turnpike. The night was foggier than even that morning had been when I met Charles in Brain-street; and we had to push our way through compact battalions of steaming white blanketing, monstrous piles of many-storied mansions starting up from time to time close against the horse's blinkers. We were nearly driving down several areas, and up several flights of steps, and I know that we twice came in collision with a gas-lamp, and once with the railings of Skye Park. Then my cabman insisted on knocking at the door of a palace of stucco seven stories high, which he declared was the building of which we were in quest. The door was opened by a colossal footman in superb livery (many more retainers, equally sumptuous



in their attire, were visible within), and a powerful odour of roast meat issuing from the lower regions somewhat confirmed the driver's opinion. But, alas! he was in error. The palace was 87½ Great Ketch-street, Gallows-gate, the residence of Sir Chowder Dhoolei Dawk, K.S.I., a Judge of the High Court of Calcutta; and we were about to be contumeliously dismissed, when the bright idea occurred to me of slipping a shilling into the hand of the superb footman, and asking him the real situation of Sahara-gardens. They fortunately proved to commence next door to the Leviathan tavern; so my cabman had only to pull up at a few dozen doors out of the nine hundred and ninety-nine to enable us to reach at last the desired haven.

We did not sit down to dinner until nearly nine o'clock: in fact, only Charles and his wife, with a deaf old lady with flaxen ringlets, and speechless, presumably a poor relation, were present in the dining-room when I arrived; and I fancied that my host was rather flustered by my arriving so early, and held that it was not quite the thing for 'no end of a swell' to do. He did not, however, forget to repeat his injunction to me to be 'as funny as I could,' and as I happened to be suffering from a sharp twitch of toothache, and to have increased my discomposure by giving half a sovereign in lieu of a sixpence to the intelligent cabman, you may imagine the remarkably favourable frame of mind in which I found myself for being 'funny.' By degrees, under salutes of thunders of heavy artillery from the knockers below, the remainder of the company arrived. We sat down to dinner some twenty strong. I was introduced to everybody; but I had never heard, in the course of my life, the names of any one of my fellow-guests; which was discomforting; for in ordinary London intercourse it is hard indeed if a middle-aged man does not light upon at least three people he knows in a party of half a score. But here I knew nobody. Dr. Huggs, Dr. Muggs, Dr. Chuggs: all medical men I opined, from their smooth bald heads and plaited shirt-fronts. Thank goodness, I didn't know those members of the faculty. Mr. Hardyknute, a stern man with black whiskers like a pair of blacking-brushes: I set him down at once as a conveyancer in Aceldama Fields. Mr. Cæsar Spong: he was palpably an American, and talked familiarly of his friends Thomas Carlyle and Alfred Tennyson. Where Charles had caught this Transatlantic stranger, and whether he was a member of Congress or the keeper of a faro-bank in Euchre-street, New York (he might have been both), I am unable to tell. The rest of the invited were totally devoid of any distinguishing characteristics, mental or physical. They muttered to each other in undertones, and so far as my experience of my next (male) neighbour went the staple of conversation was the price of butcher's meat as influenced by the prices of stocks. Stay, one man at dessert began to say something about marine insurances and bottomry bonds; but he timeously

choked himself with a piece of pine-apple, and was thenceforward mute. The women were wonderful : they outnumbered the men-folk, I think ; and the combined length of the trains (in cherry-coloured, mauve, maize, sky-blue, and emerald-green silks and satins) worn by, say, sixteen ladies, must have amounted to at least thirty-two yards. They entered the room like so many moving panoramas of the Mississippi, and you thought they were never coming to an end. Diamonds and other rare gems sparkled on their lovely persons—some of their number were really pretty girls—but, as a rule, they said nothing, having, I was inclined to think, nothing to say. I took down a very tall young lady, with about a hundredweight of false plaits streaming down between her well-developed scapulas : on the top of these plaits was a quantity of artificial flowers, and on the top of them something which, for lack of a better name, I must call a ‘fizgig.’ I know that it bobbed and wagged and sparkled. I tried this tall young lady conversationally with croquet, Schübert’s *Wanderer*, Mr. Spurgeon, the Darwinian theory, the higher education of women, the Grand Duchess of Gerolstein, spiritualism, the Monday popular concerts, the dove tournaments at Hurlingham, Mr. Voysey’s heretical opinions, and the game of bézique ; but all was in vain. I tried to draw her out with respect to short skirts and high-heeled boots—in vain. She ate and drank prodigiously ; and when I asked her what she thought of Mr. Millais’s ‘Chill October,’ she said, ‘Thank you !’ What are you to do with a young person who says, ‘Thank you !’ when she has nothing to be thankful for ? I was relapsing into a state grievously melancholy, when I remembered Charles’s entreaty to be funny, and fired-off at discreet intervals no less than five of my most popular dinner-stories, and three really good jokes—one, relative to bread-sauce, which I have rarely known to fail. All these witticisms were utter failures : not a laugh was heard, not a smile dispelled the vacuous gloom which sat brooding on the dark abyss of inanity in the countenances of the girls ; and long hours afterwards (so it seemed to me), when we went upstairs to join the ladies, Charles whispered to me reproachfully that he had never known me so unlike myself, and that I must be decidedly hipped. Perhaps I had *not* been funny ; perhaps it *was* the toothache which had made me dull. Ah, no ; it was the blighting miasma of Sahara-gardens and the upas shadows of Behemoth-gate.

The dinner was one of the most gorgeous at which, in the course of a life sufficiently fertile in gastronomic experiences, I had ever sat down. There was a great deal too much of everything : too many servants in and out of livery ; too many viands and too many wines, and too many plates and dishes and knives and forks. The entire stock-in-trade of Benson and Copeland and Gardiner, in the way of plate, earthenware, china, and glass, seemed to be heaped on that banqueting-board. An acre or two of the Royal Horticultural

Gardens at South Kensington seemed to have been called into requisition for the decoration of the *épergnes*; and the contents of a middling-sized hothouse were *en évidence* in the shape of prize pine-apples, grapes, and peaches; in fact, there was a superfluity of all things save jollity. After the ladies had swept out of the dining-room, carrying their *queues* behind them, like so many sheep belonging to a fashionable Bopeep, the gentlemen addressed themselves to their wine, took too much, and sat an unconscionable long time over it. I whispered something about a cigar to Charles; but he frowned in an ominous manner, and whispered that Mrs. C. wouldn't hear of such a thing. By this time I was profoundly miserable, and, I think, should have run away, but Charles kept a sharp eye on my movements, and I really believe had instructed the tallest footman to take away my hat and greatcoat, lest I should elope incontinent. I was doomed to drink the Saharan cup to the dregs, and to partake of Behemoth—that great ox—to the last parings of his horns and his hoofs.

We went, that is to say, I was taken, upstairs to the ladies, the muttering guests, very red about the ears with port-wine and burgundy (the claret, in magnificently-cut jugs, was detestable), following, and conspiring among themselves, I suppose, about those eternal consols in connection with the machinations of the carcass butchers. The ladies were on ottomans and sulkies and pouffs dotted about a series of magnificent saloons full of chandeliers, crimson satin-damask and gold furniture, mirrors, girandoles, consoles, lustres, and three-piled velvet carpets. The appointments were all on the most luxurious scale; but in the way of fine-art, not so much as a sixpenny *carte de visite* or a bust in Parian was to be seen anywhere. Grim silence set in, with intervals of ladies, so it seemed to me, being dragged to the piano by men clad in evening dress and of determined mien, and being there made to play and sing in a discordant manner. When relieved from this harmonic treadmill, they were dragged back again ('escorted,' I believe, is the proper term) to their seats, when they relapsed into silence, biting the tops of their fans, or examining with apparently the utmost interest any portion of their gloves which had become unsewn. Then attendants glided about with trays of tea- and coffee-cups, stumbling with those refreshments, and all but upsetting them over the variegated trains. How long they sat there, I don't know: they may be sitting there still, for aught I know, and may intend to sit there for ever and ever; but shortly after midnight I took heart of grace, and, stealing downstairs, fled from Sahara-gardens, Behemoth-gate. I have not left my card, and my name is consequently erased from Mrs. Chequerley's visitors' list. I have not seen Charles since that awful night.

## IN A COUNTRY HOUSE

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### I. ARRIVING.

It may be large or small, a lordly castle or a simple house; it may be high on a hill in the midst of ancestral trees, or unpretendingly placed in a few acres of demesne; it may be called a Place, a Hall, a Grange, a Castle, a Park, or a Cottage; but in each of these phases and under either of these names it is vastly pleasant—is a country house. Perhaps it has been inhabited by many generations of a baronial line, whose blue blood in days of old has more than once darkened on the floors; or it may be the quiet home of your maiden aunt, built forty years ago, and to which for thirty-nine the good old lady has annually asked her favourite nephew. It seems pleasantest perhaps in Scotland, though this may be from the fact that Scotch houses are generally open in *the* pleasantest portion of the year; but whether it be in Hampshire or Norfolk, Cardiganshire or Durham, Perthshire or Kerry, it is never with dislike that one looks forward to a sojourn in a country house.

And then the objects of a visit are so many. It may be that you are asked to spend Christmas with your relations, and that a vision of fair faces and happy voices, the latter mingled with the merry patter of childish feet, lights up the gloom of your bachelor life, and as you look forward to plum-pudding and Christmas-trees, you feel what a fool you are to be single. Or you may be going to hunt; and with the cheering knowledge that a string of good ones has preceded you, that your servant has relieved you of all care of your luggage, and that snug quarters and a nice set are awaiting you, you take your place in the Leicester express, with the delightful feeling that everything would be right if the confounded train would only go a little quicker. Or you may be going to a ball, perhaps to Teignmouth, whence you have received a pressing invitation from an old friend.

' You'll come to our ball : since we parted  
I've thought of you more than I'll say ;  
Indeed, I was half broken-hearted  
For a week, when they took you away.  
Fond fancy brought back to my slumbers  
Our walks on the Ness and the Den,  
And echo'd the musical numbers  
Which you used to sing to me then.  
I know the romance, since 'tis over,  
'Twere idle or worse to recall ;  
I know you're a terrible rover :  
But, Clarence, you'll come to our ball.'

Or you may be going to shoot, or to cricket, or to act, or to talk; to dine and sleep, or to stay a month; to be one of a large party, or to 'find only ourselves;' to be on company stilts, or a tame cat; to amuse others, or be amused yourself; to keep an old engagement, or to make fourteen; to see old or make new friends. But of whatever sort it be, if you are an Englishman at heart, you will not be sorry to be going to a country house.

It is remarkable that if you are shy—and Englishmen are proverbially shy—there are few occasions on which you will display your shyness to greater disadvantage than when you arrive at a country house. There will probably be in all your deeds and words a prevalence of *mauvaise honte*, which the most good-natured and well-mannered host cannot entirely dissipate, though it disappears directly the butler announces dinner. For this latter reason most people endeavour by every means in their power to arrive as short a time as is compatible with the functions of valets and lady's-maids before that meal. Sometimes, however, trains don't suit, or distances are inconvenient; and there is an uncomfortable choice between waiting at a small station and dawdling on a dirty road, or making your appearance in your host's drawing-room at about five o'clock. In the latter case, woe betide you! Far worse and far longer than the dread ten minutes before a London dinner is the time to be spent in the drawing-room before you can escape upstairs or out of doors. If there are many people in your predicament you either know them, or you do not. If you do, you have nothing much to say after you have asked them about thrice where they have come from. You and they are probably dusty and tired, and longing for hot water. You have not shaken down with your new associates, and can only talk spasmodically and without interest. If you do not know them, you feel more compelled and less inclined to make small-talk. You cannot hammer away at the weather for above five minutes, and there are few occasions at which that prolific subject leads to less. You hardly have time to open some serious topic, and you are not in a condition to produce conversational trifles with any degree of comfort to yourself. In a word, you welcome with glee the moment when you can escape to your room, and in the luxury of dressing-gown and slippers read the last number of *Belgravia* till the gong bids you to dress.

A shade better than arriving at tea-time is arriving just before luncheon. Even that meal seems to set you at your ease, and as you are probably the only arrival, you have not, as in the former case, the painful feeling that your hostess is bored to death with the duty of welcoming a lot of people who are painfully shy. The drawback is that most of the men are probably out, and your arrival necessitates some change in the programme for the afternoon.

Some people, only men of course, arrive in the morning of an



important day, and plunge at once into the picnic or cricket-match or covert-shooting which is the main object of their visit. These are wise men in their generation, but only enjoy their privilege as long as celibacy allows them.

It is observable that, as regards arriving at a country house, men are in a far worse plight than women. Girls can bolt to their friends' rooms, married women can plead fatigue and go to their own; but men, luckless men, must, after they have made their bow, stay with their hands in their pockets before the fire, or turning over the leaves of a book upside down till their hostess makes a move.

You never can tell what a man is like, or a woman either, by his or her behaviour in a drawing-room after their arrival. Of course the noisy man talks loudest, and the well-bred man knows best what to say. But as a rule the lights and shades of character do not appear. For no Englishman ever begins to show himself till he has had some soup.

But the inconveniences of arrival begin even before you have reached the drawing-room, and as an instance of this we may mention the case of two men who were going to a country house for the first time. When they arrived at the station at which they were to leave the train, a well-appointed footman touched his hat to one of them, and said, 'The carriage is here, sir, and the cart for the luggage.' They got in, pleased at their good fortune, and it was not till they had gone a mile or so that they found out, quite accidentally, from some joint occupants of the carriage that it belonged to a house in exactly the opposite direction to that whither they wanted to go. Then what a bother to change their arrangements and make new ones, to get their portmanteaus and gun-cases conveyed back to the railway-station, and thence on, while they themselves trudged through the mud! They had one consolation, however, from their mistake—they certainly did not arrive too soon.

Or you may be treated as the great statesman was who, arriving at the same time as the fiddler, was shown into the servants' hall, while Mr. Tweedledee was ushered with full ceremony into the library. Or you may be like Mr. B., who was proud of his feats of legerdemain, and on arriving at a house where he had been invited to help to amuse the company by his tricks, was rather nonplussed at being asked by the groom of the chambers 'if he was the conjurer.' Poor B. expressed himself afterwards as having been in an evil dilemma: if he said he was not, he did injustice to his own talent; if he said he was, he risked the steward's-room courtesies awaiting a professional rival.

On the whole, there are few men who do not feel shy going to a country house. Perhaps Pelham, the imperturbable Pelham, would have been an exception; but even Coningsby 'felt a little embarrassed when, without a servant and in a hack chaise, he drew up to

the grand portal of Lord Monmouth's house, and a crowd of retainers came forth to receive him. A superior servant inquired his name with a stately composure that disdained to be supercilious. It was not without some degree of pride that he replied, "Mr. Coningsby." The effect was magical. It seemed to Coningsby that he was borne on the shoulders of the people to his apartment, and he only hoped his welcome from their superiors might be as hearty.' It was, in this instance. But then everybody is not a Coningsby.

The satisfaction, then, is unalloyed which you feel when your servant has put out your things and left your hot water, and you can devote yourself to the education of your white tie. It is perhaps liable to be marred if you find that your varnish bottle has broken over your shirts, or that your brother's tr—hem! are packed up instead of your own; that your patent-leather boots are left behind, or that you have no clean pocket-handkerchiefs. But if you have a good servant, you will run few such risks, and if you have a bad one, you will be better able to 'anger' him after such a fault. And you are unlucky indeed if there is no friend from whom you can borrow, so that as, having put the last touch to your hair and your whiskers, and looked at yourself with a parting glance in the glass to see that all is right, you issue forth from your room, you feel that you can face anybody.

## II. DINNER.

You find you are sadly mistaken when you arrive at the drawing-room door, where you again undergo a course of disquietude. Though you have felt your white tie four times while coming downstairs, you are not sure yet whether it is properly tied, even if you have not a panic that you have forgotten it altogether, so you feel it again. Then as you advance from the door to the fireplace—which is your inevitable point both in summer and winter—you have a curious sensation of being summed-up by every one, whose conversation your coming has stopped.

If you are first, you take refuge in the newspapers on the table, which you have probably read already. If there are several down already, you endeavour to listen with a fatuous smile to the talk of the group nearest you, grateful if they let you join in it. But if you are second, woe betide you. It is difficult to imagine a moment of ordinary life more embarrassing than that on which, on your first night in a country house, you find the drawing-room before dinner tenanted by only one person whom you do not know very well. If it is the hostess, you are all right, but the hostess may be late; and then, as rubbing your hands you sidle towards the solitary occupant of the room, you think what on earth you can say. You cannot begin about the weather; you did that before tea. You cannot plunge into public events; and after some hesitation, which neither

you nor your neighbour quite know who is going to break, you very probably make an idiot of yourself by saying, 'Lady Jones not down yet?' as if it were not perfectly apparent that unless Lady Jones were under the sofa she could not possibly be in the room.

When the butler opens the door and in a voice of thunder announces, 'Dinner, my lady,' or makes a silent bow with the same meaning, your troubles are over, and it is 'my lady's' turn for embarrassment. Her husband sweeps away, and leaves her to the fate of telling-off her guests according to their precedence. And we pity her if she makes a mistake.

It is very easy, within the limits of a certain society, to arrange 'going out' without risk of giving offence; but when those limits are passed, there is danger in every step. For instance, who is to decide between the third son of a great baronet and the grandson of a man whose father was a duke? or between Mrs. Deeds, the wife of the eminent lawyer, or Mrs. Bullion, the lady of the wealthy merchant? And, ridiculous and absurd as it may seem, it is nevertheless a fact, that most women, and not a few men, are extremely watchful of the place which is accorded to them when going in to dinner.

It was suggested that people should draw lots; but the objection to that plan is that ill-assorted people might get together. But it may well be replied to the objection, that in the present system an attorney-general may go in with Miss Deuxtemps, whilst her favourite partner Lord Liebtanze goes in with a political dowager. One way of course would be to trust the hostess entirely, though there would be much risk of indignation from mammas who are

'planners  
Of matches for Laura and Jane,'

if those young ladies were sent in often with young Detrimental instead of Lord Maniacres.

However, 'Mr. A., will you take in Miss X.? Clara, my dear, I don't think you know Mr. A.' And off you go, for the third time in the day not being quite sure what you ought to say. But somehow, directly you have had your soup, all your difficulties vanish, and before your first entrée is followed by your first glass of 'mixed, please,' you feel astonished that your shyness should have been so great.

There is no end to the variety of dinners; we are speaking socially, not gastronomically. First, there is the banquet, where, as regards your own conversation, you might as well be dining *tête aux trois*. For there is such a mass of plate and pineapple, green-gages and glass, to say nothing of luxuriant tropical flora, that it is scarcely possible to see, much less to talk, to your opposite neighbour. And thus in a dinner of this sort you can only make the best

of those who are sitting next to you, and, if you are unfortunate enough to get between two people who make pellets of their bread, all you can do is to make pellets of your bread also. We have always thought, apropos to a banquet, that if Fate ever obliged us to ask a large number of our friends to dinner, we should either have very narrow tables, so arranged as to admit of conversation across, or should adopt a plan which we have seen tried with great success at large dinner-parties, namely, that of having a series of small tables.

Then there is the dinner of eight or ten, where all present are intimate friends, and of tastes either similar, or amusing and instructive in their variety. In these the conversation is general; each takes his share, and each hears all that goes on. A form of it is the literary dinner, where each guest is a wit or a celebrity, and where every one, without parading either his intelligence or his fame, contributes his quota to the sum of a pleasant evening.

Then there is the dinner—essentially a country-house dinner this—in the library before a ball, the dining-room having been set apart for other functions, where some of the ladies appear wholly dressed and entirely beautiful, and others are in the hybrid state of gorgeous coiffure but demi-toilette, and where one or two of the men are in black ties, under the vain pretension that they must complete their toilettes afterwards. Or it is before private theatricals, and some of the actors are dressed; so that you have the pleasing variety of a nineteenth-century Englishman in gloomy sombreness of black sitting next to a magnificent creature in all the splendour of the Court of le Grand Monarque.

Another dinner, and a very pleasant one, is that in which you are the only guest in a family circle with which you are well acquainted—where you, knowing of course one of the circle better than the rest, yet like and are liked by them all; where you are not *de trop*, but only add acceptable variety to the ‘relation talk,’ which is not hindered by your presence; and where, in a word, you experience all the joys of a visit combined with many of the pleasures of home.

We will conclude our remarks upon the dinner phase of country-house life with a few words as to a character whom you are sure to meet if you go to many country houses; in some form or other you are sure to find him. He does nothing except live for society; and as he has spent the best part of a lifetime in learning its laws and mastering its foibles, he may be considered pretty well up in his part. He does not hunt, shoot, or fish, and limits his outdoor exercise to a drive, a *tête-à-tête* walk, or a game of croquet. He can tell the last piece of gossip, the newest scandal, the latest marriage. He knows exactly how Lady B.’s cold is, and why Mrs. E. did not go to Paris. He will tell you all the doctors said about Lord X.,

and how they recommended Madeira rather than Mentone; and when he is very intimate he will tell his particular friends little bits of even more confidential information, which show that he is well acquainted with all the ins and outs of the social and domestic life of many of those who, as it is called, 'move' in society. He has no country house of his own, but he is welcome to those of others. He will come to one and stay a day or so, and then, unless he is quite happy, or if he is a little fidgety, he will rush off, under the pretext that the Duchess of R. wants him particularly to help her with her guests. He will give his advice if anything is to be got up; will help the theatricals, but not to the extent of acting; will say what ought to be done to the ballroom, and is invaluable in the event of a marriage. He is very familiar with those whom he honours with his acquaintance, but does not care much for outsiders; and he is open to the accusation of being hot and cold, according to circumstances. He likes the dinner-hour because he is a good knife and fork, and also because he loves an audience; but his great time is when the rest of the men are out of doors, when before luncheon or before tea he sits with one or two of his best friends among the gentler sex, and enjoys an hour's gossip to his heart's content. He never did an unkind action, and has done many a kind one; so the stories which he has retold may be forgotten, and those which he has invented may be forgiven. And, at any rate, it may always be said of him that he is a great addition to a country house.

EDMUND COURTENAY.



## COURSING

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XENOPHON believed, according to his *Cynegeticus*, that the hare could hardly ever be caught by the dogs by pure coursing; and he seems to have considered that to kill a single hare, even 'with all appliances and means to boot,' was a fair day's sport. If, as we read, it was the practice of the huntsman, 'sallying forth in a light loose dress, with light sandals on, and a thick staff in his hand,' to vow to Apollo and Diana the huntress a share of what may be captured, those patrons of the chase must have been easily satisfied, and by no means greedy for a bag of game. It is to be hoped they even condescended, for the occasion, to grace the banquet of their earthly devotee; for the hare could hardly have been sufficient for a large assemblage; and even that limited number, considering how the exercise required in the chase improves the appetite, would probably have served puss like Kingsley's 'feckless oubit,' and

'Tigg'd him a' to pieces sma'.'

But the greyhound of these days would cause Xenophon to alter his opinion as to that animal's powers as a pure courser. And as for the purity of his coursing, it must be pure—as far as he is concerned, at all events; for all 'running on the nose,' or even running 'cunning,' would at once disqualify him for match coursing, and cause a slur upon his pedigree as a pure-bred greyhound. Modern coursing, strange as it may seem, appears to have had its origin in Gaul; and in Blaine's *Encyclopædia* may be read the method in vogue when the sport was popular in that country. But however introduced into England, and at whatever ancient time, it is certain that coursing is now, almost as much as horseracing and cricket, one of its recognised and peculiar sports. According to Earl Wilton, although in the time of Elizabeth coursing was one of the principal diversions of the country, it was not until the following century that care was taken so to improve the breed of dogs as to give them that speed and power which they now possess. And the *Annual Register* informs us that 'the foundation-stone of the present coursing popularity was laid by the late Lord Orford, and the superstructure completed by the exertions of different amateurs, who have been so individually anxious in the improvement of the breed, that it may fairly be concluded to have at length reached the summit of possible perfection; and the pedigrees of the most speedy and celebrated greyhounds now began to be recorded with as much care and precision as the thoroughbred horses on the turf.' Lord Orford founded

the meeting at Swaffham in Norfolk ; and that was the first club or society formed. Their rules were singular, the number of members being confined to the number of letters in the alphabet, and each member's dogs being named with the initial letters he bore in the club. This practice of naming may have been the original cause of that inexplicable anxiety manifested by breeders of this day in their search after and curious manufacture of names for their favourites, which names must commence—no matter with what relevancy—with the initial letter of their own patronymics. In this interesting philological pursuit, gentlemen are not unfrequently led into the commission of the most egregious blunders ; and it must be admitted, that their selections and taste in nomenclature not only betray a want of erudition, but also tend not a little to bring coursing into ridicule. As a specimen of good christening, one instance may be sufficient—that of Mr. Randell's Rhodanthe. *Ex uno disce multos.*

Lord Orford was worthily succeeded by Lord Craven, who founded the Ashdown Park meeting, at his seat of that name in Berkshire. With the glories of that celebrated meeting will ever be associated the eccentricities and coursing propensities of Miss Richards, who resided close at hand, at Compton Beauchamp, now, as Compton Bottom, known as a famous find and trial ground for a day's coursing.

Club upon club has followed in the wake of these, until there is hardly a county in England which does not boast of a coursing meeting of more or less importance. It is only necessary to look at the list of fixtures in the sporting newspapers during the season to find where the most celebrated meetings are held, and the gradually increasing length of that list will prove how much the sport is gaining in popularity. And be it known that, as is unfortunately the case with many cricket-clubs, there is many a coursing meeting held throughout the country—and frequently as much sport enjoyed at it, too, as at many others of greater pretensions to fame and patronage—which is not distinguished by a notice and a lengthy account in the columns of the sporting press. Altcar in Lancashire, with its own club and that of Waterloo, must be considered the legitimate head-quarters of coursing. But there are many other clubs which possess far better grounds for coursing than Altcar can boast, though perhaps not holding out such opportunities for the betting man, and him who looks more to profit than to sport. Among the more prominent of these may be mentioned Amesbury in Wiltshire, Ashdown Park in Berkshire, Newmarket in Cambridgeshire, and Barton-on-Humber in Lincolnshire. It is much to be regretted that the famous Cardington club has been suffered to collapse, although it must be allowed that the fallow was too heavy and holding for the saplings brought out to contend there. The meeting and draw were held at the village of Cardington, about four miles from Bedford, on property mostly that of Mr. Whitbread, who was a great supporter of the club. Blaine

says the club enjoyed the privilege of coursing 'over a country, rich to the eye of an agriculturist, and charming to the sight of a sportsman, who rejoices in a light soil spread out in extensive slopes. The courser may well for a moment forget his anticipation of the superior sport he is sure to enjoy as he draws near the meet at Cardington—a choice specimen of a sequestered village approached through an avenue of majestic trees.'

Of a truth no more enjoyable spot could be fixed upon than this delightful old Bedfordshire village, were there only sufficient accommodation for all the visitors. As, however, it is only four miles from the chief town of the county, not much objection could be taken on that score. It is so far removed from the accustomed haunts of the betting fraternity, and its frequenters were so truly of the class which cares more for good sport than for an opportunity of making money, that the Cardington meeting was one of the most enjoyable to be met with in any county. Cirencester also has similar claims to patronage and support, and it is a pleasure to record that it enjoys these in an eminent degree. The club has a very lengthy list of subscribers, and the meeting being held under the auspices of Earl Bathurst and Mr. Masters—without whom, indeed, it could not be celebrated at all, since they generously grant the use of their estates for the purpose—its general success is assured and satisfactory. Cirencester is a very central district, as all hunting men know, and the coursing held there brings together many of those who like to see

' the dog that runs the most fair,  
Performing the most towards killing the hare.'

To be present at a draw dinner, the guests being chiefly fine old Gloucestershire farmers, and to see them play 'a knife and fork,' provided you yourself have time for a contemplation of such a performance, is good for a man's health alone, to say nothing of the warrant the process gives of genuine sport on the morrow. It is the fashion of the day to say that first-class greyhounds are only to be seen in competition at the chief coursing meetings; and it must be remembered that at Altcar, where no one but a subscriber is allowed to nominate, it is not always that he can do so from his own kennel. Sickness and want of form often prevent him from selection at home, however much he may naturally be averse to nominate a greyhound the property of another. He is therefore compelled to cast about him for as good a greyhound as he can get to represent his nomination; and it is by watching the performances of minor meetings that he is enabled to effect an arrangement and produce a greyhound that will bring no discredit on his name and kennel.

It is a saying, that 'a good horse is never of a bad colour;' and *it is equally true*, that from the recent attention bestowed upon the *breeding of greyhounds*, really good animals of all colours are to be

found in almost every county in England. A courser who is ambitious of winning the Waterloo Cup, unfortunately termed 'the Blue Ribbon of the Leash,' must not rely upon the qualities which might make his greyhound successful upon almost any other ground. No dog has won the Cup over the flats of Altcar yet who has not possessed a combination of the qualities usually looked for in greyhound excellence. The perfection of breeding appears to have culminated in the production of Lord Lurgan's celebrated Master McGrath, an animal more than a match for any competitor over any description of ground. It was not his great speed alone, wonderful as it was, that always bore him to victory. He fell headlong frequently in his courses; and he could hardly have righted himself again as he did over the Waterloo soughs if he had not been possessed of an activity that was almost feline. Many descendants of our fleetest greyhounds, the object of whose owners has chiefly been to breed up to speed only, have ignominiously failed in a sixty-four dog stake. Assuredly the 'form' of Master McGrath has thrown a new light upon the breeding of the greyhound; and men who have ocularly watched his performances will be able to form for themselves some kind of idea of the sort of greyhound likely to prove a formidable competitor over the ground where he has rendered himself famous in coursing annals. It is said, and authoritatively too, that the greyhound is now brought to the highest perfection possible. That may be so; but what of the state of the sport of coursing itself?

When things are at their worst there is a legitimate prospect, if not a certainty, we are told, of their mending. By a parity of reasoning, if coursing be at its best we may expect a speedy decadence. But when it is said that coursing is at its highest pitch of perfection, it is much to be feared that the warrant for that assertion is drawn from a consideration of the enormity of the stakes and multitude of spectators and speculators at great meetings. It is an erroneous inference. Large stakes and heavy betting are no more conducive to coursing than they have been to horseracing; and, judging of the character and quality of the majority of the crowds generally to be found attending the former, their unsportsmanlike appearance, and the probability of their ordinary avocation, it may fairly be said that the larger the crowd the worse the sport. It is impossible, perhaps, to put down betting altogether in connection with any British sport; but in coursing, at any rate, there need be no published betting-lists and quotations, and true sportsmen can at least sufficiently eliminate the 'rough' element as to prevent its becoming a nuisance.

## AMERICAN NOVELISTS

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### II. ADELINE WHITNEY.

WE have before us a novelist thoroughly and distinctively American, and yet not sufficiently identified with our ideal of the American type to form one of the American school of romance, which is yet in its infancy, if indeed it has got so far.

Mrs. Whitney's books are now pretty well known in this country, and have arrived at the dignity of cheap editions. *Faith Gartney's Girlhood*, the *Gayworthys*, and *Hitherto* are the chief works to be enumerated that have been published here. We can scarcely place Mrs. Whitney in the first rank of writers, or indeed in the rank of writers for the world at large, not because we think she is deficient in the power of so placing herself, but because she has chosen to limit her scope, in addressing herself chiefly to her own sex. Her male characters are somewhat ideal, but they have quite enough of the masculine element to pass muster in a work addressed to the general public, who perhaps prefer man as he is to man as he ought to be, in a novel. A certain section of womankind however, but more in America than here, are so imbued with a lofty conception of manhood, that they band themselves together to reject the imperfect specimens that are to be found around them. This is no new idea on their part, although made prominent to-day: near a century ago an old Scottish lady, known for her version of the *Flowers of the Forest*, her wit and her common sense, was scolding her countrywomen for a similar creed. 'The girls,' said Alison Cockburn, 'are all agog seeking an ideal man; will have none of God's corrupted creatures,—and I wonder why they wish for perfection; for my share, I would have none on't; it would ruin all my virtues and all my love. Where would be the pleasure of mutual forbearance, of mutual forgiveness? Even as a good housewife, I would choose my lord and master should have many faults, because there's so much glory in mending them; one is prouder of darning an old tablecloth than of sewing a new one.' We commend this view to the advanced young lady of the period, and proceed with Mrs. Whitney, who has created just the kind of gentleman that the advanced young lady would condescend to own. We have to thank Mrs. Whitney for books that are fresh, original, and even philosophical; but at times we could spare a little of the philosophy, if we could have it replaced by more vigorous incident and definite form of story. We have the figurative element pushed too often to the verge of the fanciful, and we are rather over-saturated



with mysticism. We should feel a sense of relief, too, could we but be assured that Mrs. Whitney's future heroes and heroines might now and then make harmonious marriages. Her characters have a persistent habit of falling in love with and being loved by the wrong people, so that they make only broken threads of their lives. One is an enthusiast, his wife a coquette; one party in the matrimonial contract is hasty and impetuous, the other frigid and reserved; one unfortunate deeply loves, while his partner lightly snubs. We become quite concerned to think how many ill-yoked mortals have to plod through life together, to each other's discomfort or positive unhappiness. We will analyse some portions of Mrs. Whitney's last and perhaps her best book.

*Hitherto: a Story of Yesterdays* begins with the minutely-detailed experiences, circumstantial and spiritual, of Anstiss Dolbeare, an original and imaginative little child, brought up by a dreadful maiden aunt, Miss Ildy Chism. Aunt Ildy gives us a sensation of personal fatigue, even though she hails from so great a distance from us as the other side of the Atlantic, and is only manifested to us through the tranquil pages of a book. She is of the Martha of Bethany type, but worked up to a higher pitch and a more exaggerated restlessness by the 'natural selection'—or whatever progressive agent it may be that acts upon the human species—of the intervening centuries. She never lets anybody waste anything, 'time, or bread-crumbs, or feelings.' Life with her amounts to this: 'that dishes should be washed after the beds were made; that dinner should be got after the house was swept; that the ironing should be done after the washing, and the mending after the ironing; that the fifth of July should come after the fourth; that things should just keep turning, whether anything turned out or not.' And her poor little orphan niece, constituted of an entirely different material, and yearning for anything that should make sweet and tender her bare path of life, and who looks upon a father and a mother and soft embraces and a home as the things really poetical, wishes that even a fire or an earthquake might come,—'anything that would joggle aunt Ildy,' and so break up the dreary monotony that fenced her young days about.

We have, too, Augusta Hare, a kindly-disposed young lady, who is the means of relieving poor Anstiss's dreariness at times. She is one over whom real things pass lightly, for she lives in the accessories. 'Where she was, things happened. John Gilpin never rode a race but she was there to see. Some people seem to have a sort of resinous electricity like this, which draws inevitably toward them all flying shreds, big and little, of mortal circumstance.'

A very fine portion of this volume consists of a take-off of crude-minded and inexperienced young people who have become afflicted with philosophical rabies, and are bent on arriving at wisdom by a

short cut. We are introduced to a woman and her daughters living at Boston who have been smitten with the 'first flush and ferment of rational, moral, physiological, philanthropic, transcendental, æsthetical philosophy.' The mother has taken the disorder rather late in life, and æsthetics 'sit somehow curiously on the substratum of homely habit and unintrospective common sense. She had a way of snatching up her raptures, as if she had all at once remembered them, or of making a supererogatory use of them, as of a new mental elegance or contrivance that she had done without all her life, but which it was the right and proper thing to find essential and inevitable now.' The younger daughter has a reading-stand by the window, where a volume of Schiller is conspicuous; she knows as yet, however, the merest rudiments of the language. These girls are always on the look-out for grand aphorisms and 'orphic sayings.' One, after a long dream of abstraction, breaks out upon an astonished company with the sudden question, electrically spoken, 'Why was Venus fabled to have arisen from the foam of the sea?' 'Because you must be clean before you can be beautiful,' says practical aunt Ildy, who is of the party. The girl drops all her papers, rushes breathlessly to the old maid's feet, and exclaims, 'Why, that's grand! that's a real thought! that's insight! I've found—a soul!'

. And talking about souls, a gentleman who finds himself at a metaphysical soirée, and is rather bored thereby, asks a young lady who does not look quite so abstruse as the rest, 'Are you going to have thoughts too? It is a terrible way people have got into lately; it reminds me sometimes of my little niece asking about her soul. She had a notion it was a kind of oval-shaped thing, lying across inside her bosom; and she wondered what it would walk about on when it got to heaven. I think we are all getting to be pure ideas; and the wonder is what we shall walk about on, or, if we do, how we shall look.' These drawing-rooms, which to the transcendentalists were simply 'sections of infinite space,' and where half-educated people were constantly 'trying on' ideas as before a looking-glass, and where the visitors were as hungry for immediate abstractions as for cakes and tea, must have been amusing. Mrs. Whitney has made requisition upon them for some entertaining pages.

The book abounds in passages of a tender and delicate insight. The little orphan, Anstiss Dolbeare, released for a brief season from her angular and unsympathetic aunt, who never dreams of fondling her or even of a kiss, is taken on a visit to the house of a cheery farmer's widow, Mrs. Hathaway, who is showing her her little room, where the sunlight is streaming on the comfortable warm-carpeted floor. "'You won't mind my coming through?" she said; "and the kitchen makes it warm." "Everything makes it warm." I couldn't help answering just so; and I turned round and put up my face to kiss her again. Somehow one always knows when one

may do that. I have often thought of it; it is as if the kiss were waiting.'

We get, too, some pretty bits of mystical childish metaphysics. We have an exceedingly ideal charity-school girl, Hope Devine, endeavouring to amuse her duller and prosaic little companion Barbara with a story. Thus she begins: 'Catherine had brown curly hair, like that pretty girl that comes to the school to fetch her little sister, and she wore a dark-red gown like hers, and a white ruffle on her neck; and there was one little chicken at Susan's grandmother's that had a speckled breast and a white tail.' 'How do you know?' says Barbara. 'Why, I just think hard, and then I see 'em. Shut your eyes and try,' replies our little dreamer. Then the prosaic Barbara would shut her eyes and see—exactly nothing. A little farther on: 'Barbara,' begins Hope suddenly, after a pause, 'there's a story about us too, somewhere.' 'O, Hope, that's an awful—jiggermaree!' She wouldn't say 'fib' to Hope. 'No, it ain't. Maybe it isn't put in a book yet; but there is a story, and somebody can shut up their eyes somewhere and see it, I know.' 'Stories ain't true things; Miss Hammond says so. And when you shut your eyes, you ain't really there.' 'You can't see anything that isn't,' says Hope positively; 'and whatever there is somebody will see—up in heaven, at any rate.' 'I'd lieveser they wouldn't be shutting their eyes and peeking at me; and I don't believe it. It's only a pretend,' says the unimaginative Barbara. 'You can't pretend what there isn't,' Hope persisted. If these are American charity-school children, there is surely more hope for them than for the little creatures dressed in sombre and depressing uniformity, whose unhappy line we see now and again winding through the muddy streets.

We often hear of the difficulty of getting a reasonable amount of work out of the American domestic servant or 'help.' In *Hitherto* we meet with one, apparently drawn from the life, who works so strenuously 'with a great might, and a canty goodwill,' that she was soon able to declare 'with a Spartan triumph, that "there wasn't a teaspoonful of dust in the house, nor a bone that didn't ache through and through in her body." ' If we could import a few of this species, without having to pay a very heavy duty on them as zoological curiosities, we should be decidedly the gainers. Perhaps Mrs. Whitney could look out a few for us. Alas! it is to be feared that such are rare and hard to be met with, like several other of the characters we meet with in these volumes. A remark, too, that one of these ideal maid-servants makes upon her work may show us that the old mystic Puritanic element is by no means obliterated from American villages. 'What's the sperrichual use, do you 'spose, of spring cleanings?' says she. 'It's a teaching world, and so I presume there's a reason; though why it wasn't all cleared up after the Creation, and fixed so's to stay, has always been one of the pro-

vidential mysteries to me. Just think what the world would be, if it only warn't for dirt! Why, I don't see why it wouldn't be kingdom come, right off! Take away the wash-days, and the scrub-days, and the cleanin'-up after everything, and clo'es growin' mean and good-for-nothin' with the grim of wearin', and I guess there wouldn't be anything left but the "rest that remaineth" and the hallelujahs!' And many an overladen housewife doubtless would be ready to echo the complaint. Such had better turn to Eugène Sue's marvellous story of the *Wandering Jew*. Therein he tells us all about the coöperative mansions of the future, which appear to produce a sort of household Paradise. The housewife takes her turn at the drudgery of household matters, and may spend her leisure hours in self-culture, or at beer and skittles if she prefers it. She would, besides, have ample opportunities of quarrelling with her neighbours, who in a coöperative establishment might be very near neighbours indeed.

But Mrs. Whitney's books deserve that we should be more serious. For a woman's books, they are very remarkable ones. We meet here and there with flashes of genius that illumine wide expanses of thought. Touching upon the idea of an Omnipresent Being, a little girl asks her teacher, 'If He is everywhere, and fills all, how can any other spirit be created and find room?' The question is a natural one enough for a quick-witted child; but the thought which we find flashing upon the mind of another in reply to it is more abstruse and mature than it is probable would proceed from a juvenile brain. The answer comes by a sudden blending in the mind of chemical and spiritual laws, the flash coming from the sentence of Dalton, that 'different gases are as vacuums in respect to each other;' whence the revelation that spiritual presences may coexist separately without hindrance of space. Mrs. Whitney puts a little too much of herself, probably, into her school-girls.

Here is another thought, stated with noticeable force and freshness: "But terrible things happen; and we can't see what the evil is for." So she touched the great, troubled, unanswered question, and looked at him as if he might haply solve it. "It takes thousands of years' records to prove the compensation for disturbance yonder," Grandon Cope replied, with his face toward the stars; "God works at an infinite diagram." It was like a thought that had come to him so in his daily pursuit and research, that it was quite familiar.

It is not bad, either, where the philosophical Cambridge man, Grandon Cope, is trying to reason Anstiss out of her fears in a thunderstorm. 'When you think of the stars waiting just the same beyond, it seems a very little fizz, doesn't it?' To which she rejoins, 'But then, we are very little—ever so much littler, you know; and we are right *in* the fizz!' This is very good, and not an unnatural remark for a clever child.

We cannot always say so much for Mrs. Whitney's books as regards literary style as in their more ideal aspects. There are scores of words we have never met with before, and whose meanings we have to guess at. They are for the most part, however, expressive, when we have once arrived at their meaning, and perhaps they may be familiar to Americans. Our cousins, we suppose, have an equal right with any other nation to coin words when required; but it is rather hard upon us, who are not admitted behind the scenes. The form of Mrs. Whitney's sentences, too, is variable. For the most part she is terse, homely, and colloquial. Here, however, we have a fragment which must be taken as example of a higher flight. It is in reference to the birth of an infant in a small red house, deep in a wild newly-cleared tract of New Hampshire: 'And into the small home came the pain and the peril and the joy that are the same in palace and cabin, and by equal chrism and crown make every woman who so suffers and receives a queen.' In its alliterations and copulated substantives does it not recall the rhythm and roll of our melodious Swinburne's prose? Possibly, however, Mrs. Whitney has never even heard of him. Her prose is often forcible, and her descriptions of scenery deep in the rich country of New England are, many of them, fine. Take the following scene by the river in the November Indian summer: 'Up and over the low-spread splendour opened the wide soft sky. Through the thinning branches of the trees came down the last most tender kisses of the sun. But the deep banks held us in the old beautiful seclusion. The warmth came down for us, and the still gorge gathered it in, and held it, a river above a river, a tide of glory filling it up to the brim. We seemed to breathe the sunlight. The life drawn into us was golden.' The production of such glow and colour as this, so subdued and yet so rich, speaks strongly for Mrs. Whitney's artistic faculty.

Mrs. Whitney's books, essentially American as they are in so many respects, are yet strikingly opposite to what we accustom ourselves to look upon as American tendencies. She generally marries her heroes and heroines while in a state of inexperience and rawness; and often consequently they find in a while that they do not suit each other as they expected; or the wrong people have become yoked, while the right ones are mourning over their disappointments. But Mrs. Whitney does not advocate the advanced views. She does not say, O, why not break the false bonds and take to yourselves new and better ones? She considers our present state of existence to be a fragmentary piece of life, wherein we must expect to find broken threads and only morsels of happiness; and that difficulties and misconceptions are part of our necessary training, from which we must not escape. So all mistakes of this kind must be patiently lived through, and amended as much as possible by time and hopefulness. As one



of her characters, who is not quite comfortably wedded, says: 'We are married, and we must just go on.'

Her chief power lies in the minute and delicate painting of the inner and spiritual aspects of her characters. Different though she is in innumerable ways from George Eliot or Charlotte Brontë, we are more than once reminded of the *Mill on the Floss* and *Jane Eyre*. We have spoken of the unpleasant sensation with which Miss Ildy Chism, that ancient maiden of 'hands-off, gunpowder beneficence,' inspires us. She is brought so vividly before us that we are uncomfortably sensible of her presence. We sympathise with the tender-souled little niece who has to sit under her 'cast-iron smiles' and her great gray eyes, that had a way of looking 'as if the very day of judgment were coming out of them.' We are brought so closely and naturally into the child's constrained life that we feel its oppression, just as in Miss Brontë's marvellous romance we are made to share the dulness of Jane Eyre's life in her aunt's household and at the wretched boarding-school. George Eliot has the same faculty, and even more strongly. In the *Mill on the Floss*, for instance, persons of the most ordinary and commonplace type, narrow-minded, prosaic, and painfully-respectable provincials, are depicted with such vigorous truthfulness, that we are compelled against our will to add them, as it were, to the list of our living acquaintance. Who that has read the *Mill on the Floss* cannot call to mind the well-meaning but mean-minded uncles and aunts, into whose circle we cannot resist the novelist's introduction, though we protest all the time silently and in vain against the being brought so close to people for whom we have such decided antipathies? In *Hitherto* we meet with four sisters, the 'Polisher girls,' who have lived together in a little cottage from sentimental youth to precise old age, and yet without losing, even when gray-haired, the dreams that would have seemed pretty in their youth. The two younger ones—old faded maidens, with pinched faces and breasts whose roundness has fallen away—yet find delight in building castles in the air, consisting of the nuptial homes they might have had, and the children that there might have been. These simple old women have even got to love these poor dream-children of theirs and have given names to each of them, and seem to know how they would look and behave. Alas for frustrate instincts! There seems even a cruelty of pathos in bringing the artless foibles of these faded old creatures into the light. But Hope Devine, the sweet little mystic of the story, sees nothing to cause either pain or laughter in their lives. 'You can't see anything that there isn't somewhere and somehow,' she says. And this is an argument in favour of the reality of the ideal world of our dreams that there is no refuting.

But apart from mysticism, there are some humorous examples of Mrs. Whitney's powers of observation, which, should she ever

come to build up a story on a broader basis than she has done hitherto, could be made most effective. Two of the 'Polisher girls' are preparing for a nap on a sultry autumn afternoon. Euphrasia, the youngest, 'folded down the smooth bed-quilt, laid an old shawl across the lower end for their feet, turned up the night side of the pillows, and she and Denice prepared to mount. This they had to do by agreement and with military precision, so as not to "roll" the bed. First, they got crickets, upon which they stood at either side; then, with exact calculation, each put a foot up into the very spot where it was to stay—Miss Denice her right foot, Miss Frasia her left; then, with a grasp of the bed-posts, they swung themselves up, right and left face, the nice point here being not to bump their heads as they met aloft; and then they sat, and finally reclined, everything turning out with the marvellous precision that could only come of perfect plan and long usage. Upon which each sister said, "There!" with a satisfied breath of accomplishment and giving up, which was a part of the performance, and a beginning of repose. I suppose they had done just so for forty years.' This is worthy of Dickens for mingled humour and pathos.

One special characteristic of Mrs. Whitney is, that she endeavours to excite our interest, not in what the characters of her stories will do, but in what they will become. We are led to contemplate their development rather than their actions. There is no doubt that in real life we often think more of what our friends really are than of any particular action they may have done; but to feel such an interest as this in a character for its own sake, we must first be brought into close sympathy with it. This Mrs. Whitney in a great measure effects; but her books would gain in interest by the introduction of a more vigorous plot.

Mrs. Whitney has, confessedly, written her last novel chiefly for her own sex. If she would compose another one containing a little less investigation of the immaturities of girls' minds and a little more of vigorous incident, she might take a high place as a novelist. She has intellectual stamina enough to create manly men; of this Richard Hathaway, the hero of *Hitherto*, may be taken as evidence; and if she could introduce us to a new circle wherein the males should not be quite separated from communion with each other owing to the endless feminine floods that overflow the book, we imagine that the result would be worth having. It may be wrong to ask Mrs. Whitney to step out of a field she may have chosen, and in which she may find her chief strength to lie; but there is such a freshness in her way of stating old thoughts, and so clear a colour, so direct an aim, and so comprehensive a grasp are noticeable in her writing, that we should greatly like to meet with a book of hers that had not been written chiefly for women. It is interesting to note how a book which contains the elements of success in any particular line makes

its way along the appropriate paths and byways of that immense open field, the public. We confess there is something mysterious to us in the way a book *takes*, as the saying is. Probably a publisher could not altogether explain how it comes that one book should be extensively advertised and yet go off slowly, while another with scarcely any pushing should take a start unexpectedly and have a rapid sale. Is the fame of it carried, like the fiery cross of the Scottish clans, from hand to hand and from village to village? Is the result all owing to the stray conversations of chance-met friends at a ball, or coming from church, or during a morning call? One family, perhaps, is having the book read aloud; and visitors come and carry a bit of it away with them in their memories, where the title, too, is stored against their next visit to the library. In spite of all the critics, the public appears to form its own tastes in literature as decidedly as in groceries. We could understand such an explanation as we have attempted of the growth of a book's popularity if only the demand for it increased by slow degrees. But when a week sees a book in almost every house! Works of a high order seldom mature their popularity in less than ten or twenty years; those which fall in with such sudden favour must, as a rule, connect themselves with some temporary circumstances which occupy people's minds for the moment, and so force themselves into every conversation on the subject. Mrs. Whitney's books do not in suchlike fashion fire a wide field of stubble that afterwards falls into forgetful ashes; they make their way gradually, and bear the modest marks of second edition. What we specially like in them is their healthy geniality. We have noticed this quality in more than one writer now sending over to us volumes from America. It is noticeably manifest in Californian literature, the works of Mark Twain and Bret Harte for instance. The wide breathing-place of the American continent seems to foster good-humoured charity and cheerful candour. There is neither the *ennui* of France nor the reserve of England. 'There is great meaning,' says Mrs. Whitney, 'in the word "heartiness." The soul does not lie in a point; it fills the whole human creature. A child, or a complete healthful man or woman, will lay the hand on the breathing bosom to express its being and its feeling; it is large and palpitant there, and thence it thrills to the very finger-ends; one with only a brain and a marrow will be aware but of a buzzing and spinning in the skull.' A certain morbidness and moping is touching literature here to some extent; perhaps the struggle for existence is growing too keen to allow sufficient healthy play of life. The return to the broad and genial heartiness of which we have spoken recalls to us our jolly Elizabethan literature, somewhat purified by nineteenth-century influences. But Mrs. Whitney only lets us have a taste of this heartiness now and then. Her characters for the most part err on the side of over-sentimentality.

They begin very young to see problems in nature and their own lives, to make themselves, as it were, responsible for the difficulties they meet with, and to be weighed down by trials that seem great because thought so much of. Mrs. Whitney would probably reply, that she is but painting the introspective young lady of the nineteenth century, who incessantly questions her destiny, her character, and her circumstances until she grows rather morbid, and has dark circles round her eyes. But in this her last book *Hitherto* Mrs. Whitney introduces us to her pet character, Hope Devine, the antidote to the restless unsatisfied girls who are incessantly passing their souls through crucibles, and balances, and all sorts of spiritual tests and examinations. Hope Devine is indeed a charming conception. Says her creator: 'I am glad when you like my Hope Devine. I like her too. Upon the breath of her sweet graciousness runs all my own argument and drift.' The worst of it is that Hope is an almost impossible character in this mysterious world of ours. She cannot be called goody-goody, but she is perfectly good; she is simple and sweet-hearted, of an angelic nature, whose vision looks far ahead, and so avoids incessant and unhealthy contemplation of self. We must set her down as an ideal, a beautiful dream, and give her a place by the side of one of Victor Hugo's most sublime conceptions, Bishop Myriel of *Les Misérables*.

We should say that the underlying idea of these volumes is the advocacy of the exercise of patience in bearing any bonds that life may put upon us, as opposed to the exercise of the will in bursting them. She prefers a hopeful sort of *laissez aller* to the most spirited revolt against circumstances. If an individual is pressed by discomfort, he must not be pushing and restless, and endeavour incessantly to force his way out, but must patiently bide his time, till he shall have received his lesson, when the proper means of escape will be shown him. We will not argue the question between these opposite principles of action, but will content ourselves by remarking what widely opposite types of characters the following of them would produce.

It is possible that the author is not consciously alluding to herself in the passages we quote that follow; but we get from her own pages some remarks which seem to apply admirably to her peculiar faculty. The book called *Hitherto* has, it may have been noticed, for secondary title *A Story of Yesterdays*. The author suggests that since, as our to-days turn into yesterdays, we grow wiser concerning ourselves, it would be good for some old woman to tell a story of her youth. 'Women, and men too, are so apt to cry out when the first stress of their life is upon them, to give their raw pain and passion utterance. The world is full of such outpourings.' If a girl of twenty, instead of scribbling of disappointment and endurance, of which she can know so little, would but let years pass by, and

then look back upon the yesterdays and speak, Mrs. Whitney thinks we should have a riper and a different story. Probably we should; but would the colours be so vivid? We find the answer to this in another place. 'There is such a thing as a genius for retrospection,' and by this faculty we unravel the vaguely beautiful suggestions of childhood, and by analysing instinct recall them in fuller meaning.

Mrs. Whitney has evidently thought a great deal, and has unravelled a great many difficulties. She has quite a manner of her own of simplifying the problems of life. We do not object to her thoughts at all,—they are notably fine and full of insight,—but we sadly want more vigorous incident in her books, to act as a foil to the speculative element, which otherwise is in danger of growing monotonous in a novel. With a stronger and more definite plot, and less of 'silent sides' and 'what a voice tells,' and the rather overdone analysis of the inner souls of her characters, Mrs. Whitney could give us a book worth having, wherein her thoughts might fall naturally and less obtrusively into their fit places, and so produce a real and healthy effect.

KENINGALE COOK, B.A.

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# JACK PUGH'S LEGACY

## A Tale

BY FREDERICK TALBOT, AUTHOR OF 'THE WINNING HAZARD'

IN TWO PARTS :—PART I.

### CHAPTER I. THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS.

ONE of the principal features of the town of Tregonwy is its reading-room. This stands in a corner of the market-place, and its large square window commands a full view of the Goat Hotel, of the Post-office, which is also a grocer's and draper's shop, and of the entrance to Plasyndre, or the palace in the town, which, once the royal residence of a native prince, has now become a nest of stuffy little apartments for the poorest of the poor. You couldn't see the whole of the market-square from our reading-room, because a big modern shop and warehouse stood out like an island between, and somewhat curtailed the prospect. But, as far as it went, it was a very fine view ; and we were all proud of our reading-room, and used to show it to strangers as one of the lions of the town.

Among its most constant frequenters was an old man by name John Pugh. In fact, he almost lived there, having nowhere else to go, as he rented only a fourth share of a tiny chamber in the palace before mentioned ; and his tenure even of that was uncertain, seeing that he never paid any rent, and the roof was in danger daily of falling in. It was out of charity we allowed Pugh to use the rooms, and he had the run of them on the condition that he should keep the papers tidy, stir the fire and put on the coals in winter, and generally make himself useful. But poor John, like many other unfortunates, had too much zeal. Many of the regular subscribers complained that he poked the fire too much, and he would be quite rude to anybody who wanted a newspaper, and proposed to disturb the symmetrical piles in which he had arranged them. His notions of order, too, were simply mechanical. He was no respecter of dates ; the paper of a week ago was just as good as to-day's, if its edges were straight and square with the rest.

Hence, as time went on, and fresh people joined the reading-room, who weren't of the old families of the place, and hadn't the same kindly feeling to old Pugh—who had seen better days, having been a land-steward and a very respectable man, till he got wrong with his accounts, and so lost himself—it happened that his attendance at the rooms became a bone of discord among us.

Our society was thus divided into Pughites and anti-Pughites,

and there would be hot discussions at our monthly meetings as to his admission or exclusion. Nor was this the only point on which these new-comers, who had none of them been settled in the place for more than twenty years, and couldn't be said to have acquired any position, endeavoured to make mischief among us. As a rule, I must confess we had not been in the habit of paying our subscriptions regularly; but then, what did it matter? we were sure to pay in the end; and although, under the influence of the strangers, many resolutions were passed on the subject at our monthly meetings, nobody took any notice, and things went on as before. Then, one day the newsagent stopped the supply of the papers, not being able to get his bill, which was a very high-handed proceeding on his part, and didn't do him any good in the end. After that, the landlord threatened to distrain for rent; and then we all agreed that something ought to be done, and that our subscriptions ought to be paid-up one of these very first days.

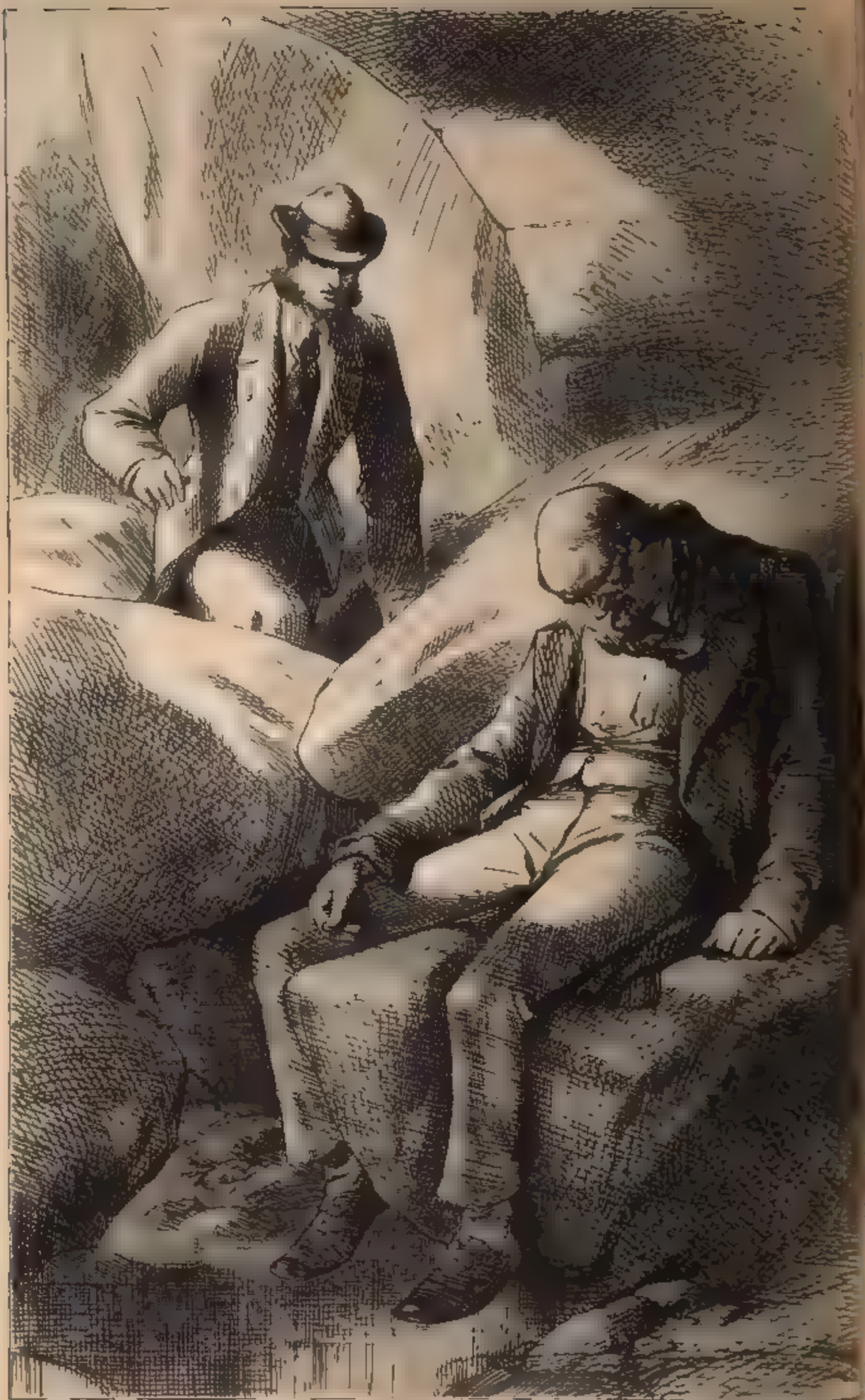
But we were not going to be driven, and Jones, our secretary, wasn't the man to drive us, being a good-hearted fellow, who hadn't it in him to be unpleasant to anybody.

The difficulty about the *Times* newspaper was got over by employing another newsman, who knew his place better than the last, and the affair of the rent didn't come to anything; and so for a time we went on in our own quiet way, and a few new members came in who did pay; and so, when Gwen Morris's wages became due,—she was the old lady who did the sweeping and cleaning for us,—they were paid to the day. Gwen, I must tell you, was also the agent to our fishery club, and sold all the salmons that were caught in our nets; and if you didn't keep on the right side of Gwen, next time you had a dinner-party and wanted a fine salmon—well, you'd have to go without.

Now, Gwen and old Pugh were at deadly feud, and she didn't conceal her desire that he should be made an end of as soon as possible. With this view, as Pugh was nearly always the first in the rooms in the morning, Gwen would put pails and brushes in the way, so that he might fall over them and break his neck; but though Pugh's eyesight was dim, yet, being a cautious man, he generally carried a stick in front of him, and so contrived to steer clear of danger. But one day Jones, the banker, who was going off by the coach, came in first in a great hurry to see the paper, and nearly broke his legs over a bucket of dirty water, besides getting very wet and tearing a hole in his coat, which, as he had a long drive before him, was very uncomfortable. Then there was a great disturbance, and much talk of asking Gwen to retire.

That gave rise to a fresh schism in our society, and caused a great deal of ill-feeling, and was a very bad thing for old Pugh. Before this, all the Pughites were very good friends, though they





would hardly speak civilly to the anti-Pughites ; but now the party was split-up again into Gwenites and anti-Gwenites, and the old banker, who had been Pugh's strong supporter, went over to the other side, and carried a good many with him. So, at the very next general meeting there was, the anti-Pughites took advantage of the division, and carried a resolution dispensing with his farther services, and forbidding him access to the rooms.

I was very sorry for Pugh, who had known my father and my uncle and all my family, and whenever I met him I'd treat him with a glass of ale ; and there were many other people who took his part—notably little Tom the Doctor, who would let him sit by his kitchen fire all day long if he liked. But, as Pugh would say, sorrowfully shaking his head, ' It isn't like the reading-room, sir, is it ?—there's not the company.'

Tom had for many years given old Pugh his Sunday's dinner, in return for which he'd wait at table if there were any guests. One Sunday—I remember it well—I went to dine with Tom, who was a bachelor, according to invitation, and Jack Pugh was to be the waiter. I found my host rather excited, as Pugh had just broken half-a-dozen of his best dinner-plates, and Tom had tried to calm his nerves by a little whisky-and-water, which had had just the wrong effect. There were three or four other men there as well as myself, and we were all merry enough, when one of the party, who was a new-comer, began to talk about the reading-room. Old Pugh was pouring out the beer at the time from a large square glass bottle that held about two quarts. Tom didn't keep any beer in the house, but used to send for it to the Cross Keys, which was noted for cwrwdda.

You'll remember that on Sundays the public-houses were only open from twelve to one. There was a private law to that effect that our magistrates had passed, and nobody dared to break it. Yes, whatever you may say, we keep the Sabbath well in Wales—yes, indeed. Well, we had emptied the first bottle, which was a fellow to the one Pugh had in his hands, and this was the first out of the second bottle, and two bottles were the Doctor's allowance, which he never exceeded, whether there was company or not. If there wasn't company, the Doctor himself and Jack the Huntsman and old Pugh, who were kept to the kitchen on gala-days, would sit down and finish the quantum cosily together, and when it was all gone there was an end of it, as you may suppose, the public-houses being all closed for the day. Now, you may fancy all this time Pugh is pouring out the beer from the big bottle, only, his attention being engrossed by the talk about the reading-room, and he craning his head the other way, instead of pouring it into my glass, he poured it into my pocket. It was just then I began to feel very sloppy, and I sang out, ' Hollo, Pugh !' and I was sorry next moment, for



the Doctor got up and gave him a cuff on the head, and Pugh dropped the bottle on the floor, where it flew into a thousand bits. The beer went, of course, and we were all very sorry; but it made it worse to see the way little Tom went on. No, I won't tell you how he swore and cursed, and how we had to hold him down, four of us, for fear he should make an end of poor old Pugh. But the old man was smuggled out of the house, and the Doctor made a solemn vow, when he became a little more collected, that he should never set his foot inside it again.

Well, it was rather late when we broke up; but I was walking very steadily home, perhaps a thought too steadily, seeing that it was a bright moonlight night, and nobody to interfere with me; but I kept carefully to the centre of the road, and looked at the tips of my fingers in the moonlight, thinking how steady my hand was, and yet wondering a little how I should feel when I got into bed and my wits had got nothing to hold on by, and by and by I came to the bridge that spans the little river Arran. 'Tis a sweet stream that, and comes leaping down, foaming and frothing, among the rough boulders that line its bed, right between dark, gloomy, overhanging houses. A bright silver—bah! silver! what silver is so bright as Arran by moonlight? And the babble of it, don't I hear it now—its soothing, delicate, subtle voice!

I think there's something jolly and earthlike about the moon. I own I can't look a star in the face when, if ever, I am over the line. But the moon has a cantie knowing look about her. She understands it all, bless you—she won't tell any tales.

'It is the moon, I ken her horn!'

I cried, as I leaned over the parapet of the bridge. Now, as the moon was just full, this wasn't quite an appropriate quotation. Still, it was near enough. Pencerrig was glooming up yonder; shadowy, dim, undefinable, lowering beneath a canopy of silvery clouds. I longed for wings, as I watched the changing shadows of the clouds, that I might leave this dull coarse fellow staring with fishy eyes over the bridge, and soar to the empyrean.

All of a sudden I heard a cough.

It startled me, for I couldn't see a soul nigh. It must have been a sheep I'd heard on the meadows higher up. Again I heard it, and it seemed to come from under my feet. I peered over the parapet of the bridge; one of the arches was nearly dry; and sitting on a boulder, with his feet near the bubbling stream which ever and again lipped his old broken shoes, was an old man; and he was crying. It's a very sad sight to see an old man cry; the thing is so hopeless.

Just then the moon, flying across the speckled sky, had plunged into a thick and heavy cloud, and for the moment the old man disappeared in the shadow of the bridge. A footpath ran along the

farther side of the river, on an embankment formed of huge cyclopean stones. From this embankment it was easy to leap down into the river-bed, shallow enough on this side of the bridge. Below, the river had hollowed out a basin in the rocks, and there the water was four or five feet deep. I called once or twice to the old man, asking him what was the matter; but I heard no answer except a suppressed groan; and then, without more ado, I scrambled down into the river, and splashing and stumbling through the sharp and eager stream, I reached the bank of gravel under the arch of the bridge, where the old man was sitting. Yes, it was old Pugh! wet to the bone, and almost perished with cold. He was as light as a feather, poor old man, and I had no difficulty in taking him up and placing him on the river-bank. But what should I do with him next? All the town was asleep; there wasn't a light in a window, nor a gleam through the crevice of a door. My own lodgings were close at hand. There was a fire in the kitchen I knew, kept up all night. I would take him there. The old man could totter along on his feet, and we had only a few hundred yards to go.

Presently, beside a blazing fire, and having drunk some hot brandy-and-water, Pugh revived. I brought down an old suit of clothes and made him put them on; and not feeling inclined to go to bed, owing to that little difficulty I knew I should experience as to hanging up my wits on something, I sat up by the kitchen fire and talked to old Pugh. Yes, he said he'd thrown himself into the pool below the bridge, intending to drown himself; but the water was so cold, that he changed his mind when he got in, and scrambled on to the bed of gravel. It was the Doctor's unkindness that had driven him to it. If he wouldn't have him at the house any more, it was no use his trying to live. I comforted him by telling him that Tom's wrath was short-lived. 'Why, just before I left he called for Jack Pugh, and wanted to know why the d—d old rogue wasn't there to put him to bed.'

'Did he, now?' said Pugh, the tears coming into his eyes; 'did he speak so kind? O Tom, bach, why did I break the bottle of beer? It wasn't to be wondered at he was angry, was it, sir? Will you tell him, sir, when you see him, that I was humbly sorry for what I did, and I hope he'll think kindly of me, sir. And—and will you remind him what he promised?'

'What was that? he'll very likely forget all about it.'

'That he'd give me a funeral,' whispered Pugh. 'It was that that drove me to the river, sir. For, thinking what I'd done, I knew I couldn't expect to have a funeral, sir; but I think now he's spoken so kindly of me, perhaps he'll give it me, after all. What do you think, sir?'

'But I wouldn't think about funerals at all now, Pugh. Bless you, *man*, you'll be dancing at somebody's wedding before long.'

‘No, sir, no. I know what you mean, and I wish you well, sir, and your young lady; but I sha’n’t be there, sir—no, indeed! But if I could be sure about the funeral, sir,—O, it would be comfortable indeed!’

‘Look here, Pugh,’ I said; ‘make your mind easy about that. You shall have a funeral. If Tom won’t give you one, I will.’

‘O, Mr. Edwards, bach!’ cried Pugh, seizing me by the hand—he hadn’t shown me the least gratitude for pulling him out of the river, but could I wonder at that?—‘O, Mr. Edwards, indeed I am pleased with you! Well, you sha’n’t lose by it; no, indeed! Look here, Mr. Edwards, bach!’ he cried, fumbling with trembling fingers in his breast; ‘here, you see this slate? I give it you, sir; yes, for yourself.’

‘And what am I to do with it, Jack?’

‘Keep it, sir; keep it till I can explain it to you. There’s a fortune, sir, in that slate—two fortunes, sir; but not for me; O no, sir, I can do nothing with it. But you can; you’re young and strong, and have got friends. Yes, sir, it will be worth a fortune to you.’

It was a little square slab of slate he gave me, wrapped up in a bit of greasy canvas. I regarded it with complete indifference. I knew all about it, as I thought. So many of these men know of some wonderful vein of slate which will make any number of fortunes. But I knew better. I had thoroughly explored the district, and I’d found that, although there was excellent slate for slabs, yet that somehow or other these great loaves of mountains had had a turn or so too much in nature’s oven, and had lost that even flaky cleavage which distinguishes the really lucrative beds. So I pocketed the slab of slate with the greatest indifference.

‘I’ll tell you all about it in the morning,’ whispered Pugh. His head had sunk on his breast; he fell back on the settle in a profound slumber; and I crept off to bed, the blink of daylight just glimmering in the east. That morning, when Mrs. Evans went down to put the kettle on for breakfast, she found old Pugh stretched out on the settle stark and stiff. He had passed from slumber to death without a struggle.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE OLD MAN’S HEAD.

It was about a year after this—I had married in the mean time, and had settled down in a house of my own—that I received one morning a letter from my friend Baker, who’s in the City.

‘Dear Ned,’ it began, ‘there never was a time when money was so ridiculously cheap as it is now, or when your faithful friend found it more difficult to get. Conby spoke to me the other day: “Haven’t you a friend living near Dolmelyn? Is he a good man?”’

I told him you were the best-regulated fellow I ever knew. "Then," he said, "I wish you'd write to him and ask him if he knows anything about slates." "I needn't write," I said; "my friend is always looking after slates—reason why, to complete his own set, I should judge, having one or two missing." "Then," said Conby, "ask him to run over and look at the Dolbrith quarry. We're thinking of buying it and starting a company, only we don't feel quite sure of our men. I've not time to go myself." Now, it struck me this was a job you'd like, and while you're about it you might just as well do something for yourself and me. Anything will go down just now—tin, lead, gold, silver, copper. We only want a good prospectus, and I've just been thinking you'll look uncommonly well in a list of directors; Edward Edwards, of Dyddledoldumdyddle, Esq., J.P.—are you J.P.?—well, it don't matter; it will do for judgmatical party, anyhow—Managing Director, eh? Prospect! prospect! And send us up a cartload of stones—well-speckled ones—as a sample of the ore. If you meet with a compact little farm with a good vein of anything on it, buy it up for the company. Remember, unlimited capital at our back; and, by the way, if you have a spare fiver, you might as well lend it us,' &c. &c.

My wife, who was reading my letter over my shoulder,—it's a bad plan that, mind you; jolly enough in the first bloom of unlimited affection, only take my advice, don't begin it; there's a difficulty in breaking it off,—my wife exclaimed, when she came to that part of it, 'You'll not lend it him, Ned? You'll never get it back again.'

'O yes, I shall; Baker never lets-in his friends.'

'And you won't go into those speculations? they're so dangerous.'

'There's no harm in looking about anyhow,' I said. And with that I put on my boots, took down my fishing-rod, and strolled away to the river, to see if I couldn't rise a trout or two. But I tried all my favourite holes without success—there wasn't a fin moving; and by and by, when I came to the long wooden plank which, supported on piles of great stones, forms a tremulous and uncertain bridge over the river,—it is moored by a stout chain to the bole of a tree that overhangs the bank, and in flood-times it floats away from its piers and hangs safely among the bushes by the river brink,—when I came to the plank, I sat down and began to think. 'Tis a lovely spot. Three valleys debouch upon it; one with rough rugged sides, a narrow stern ravine; another wide and fertile, with rich pastures by the river's marge, and wooded sloping banks, over which just peep the rude crests of seared primeval hills; and these two valleys uniting sweep down to the sea, environed by tiers of soft blue mountains. Well, I sat there and began to think, and sat so still that the water-hen didn't see me as she came sailing down the stream;

nor the rat, as he suspiciously cruised along by the bank ; nor the sulky old salmon in the big pool above, who, for want of something better to do, took himself by head and tail and flipped himself high into the air, coming down with a thundering splash that startled the sleek rat into his hole, and set the squirrel overhead chattering in peevish complaint. And with that I roused from my reverie, and put my hand into my coat-pocket to feel for Baker's letter. I wore the shooting-coat with the big pockets that I'd worn at Tom's dinner-party a year ago, and my hand touched something hard in the corner of the pocket. It was old Pugh's legacy, the square slab of slate. After all, if this bit of slate were of good quality, and there was anything to show where it was got, it might be worth looking after. It was a good, firm, close-grained piece of slate, and it had upon it some figures, rudely but deeply carved. Let me see, there was the face of a man, the nose very prominent, the tongue sticking out of the mouth ; behind the face there was a circle of stars or crosses, and from one of the crosses an arrow. This was on one side of the slab ; on the other was a confused group of waved lines and dots, of which I could make nothing.

'Well,' I heard a voice behind me say, 'I never seen anything so beautiful as that ! If this ain't wuth coming all these miles to see ! I ain't seen nothing like this in all Wales. Why, there 'tis, the very thing ! the nose, the mouth, the hi's, everything—just for all the world like my poor old father ! Look at that, gals ! Ain't it wuth all the waterfalls and crags and nasty rough places you thinks so much about ?'

'O, pa, it's very curious ; and all that—'

'Curious ! It's the naturalness of the thing. To think it should be the very likeness of my poor old father ! Well, I *am* pleased !'

I looked up, and saw that a party of tourists were standing by the bank of the river admiring the view, and one particular hill which, just seen over the wooded banks, resembled the profile of an old man's face. The father was a stout East Anglian farmer ; the daughters were nice-looking girls of the usual type.

'What, sketching, sir !' cried the man good-humouredly, when he spied me in my nook. 'Ah, if you'd sketch that there mountain that's so like my poor father ! Why, what, you've got him, sir, there, I see !' he cried, looking over my shoulder ; 'and cut-out on a slate too ! Look here, gals ; I call that a sensible way of taking picturs ; won't rub out or nothing.'

Really, when I looked at it closely, the face that was scratched on the slate was the very model of the one the storms and frosts had chiselled on the mountain's ridge.



## CHAPTER III.

## COCK-CROW BEFORE DAWN.

WE drove over to the Dolbrith quarry next day, my wife and I. The said quarry consisted as yet only of a small hole about six feet square, driven a few yards into the rock. However, there were prospects, bounded only by the limits of human imagination. There was slate, no doubt; and after you had pulled off the top of the mountain and sunk a few hundred thousand pounds, you might possibly find that it was worth the getting. Still, it was a decidedly genuine affair, and quite good enough for City men to dabble in.

We dined with Captain Parry, an old friend, living near the quarry; and as we knew that the moon was at her full, we didn't hurry away. It was about eleven o'clock when we reached Dolydd. (The name of Dyddledoldumdyddle, which Baker had affixed to my residence, was a mere vulgar joke.) My man, who didn't sleep in the house, had given us up for the night and gone home; so I had to look after the horse myself. That didn't trouble me, however; we had driven quietly home, and he was quite cool, and if I'm to act as groom, let me have the bedding-up for my share of the work. The dim half light, the yellow rustling straw, the fragrant-smelling hay, the comfortable champing of the horse over his corn, give one a sense of rest and peace that is quite pleasant in these rasping days. Well, I'd done him up, and put everything tidy, and sat down on the corn-chest to smoke a pipe and watch him feed: I'd been muddling about for an hour or so, and as I sat there smoking, I heard the clock of the church, which was over the river, about half-a-mile from Dolydd, strike out the hour, twelve. There was a profound stillness over everything, broken only by the rattle and gurgle of the little spring that flowed from a rude natural arch close by—that, and the methodical champing of the horse over his corn. Dolydd was a solitary place; there was no house nearer than half-a-mile; the river ran in front; behind, the mountain stretched up into dim cloud-land; I could reach its summit without passing a human habitation, or meeting a single human being.

Tap, tap, tap, tap, tap! I heard a series of sharp knocks as of some one hammering close by,—in the coach-house, indeed, which adjoined the stable.

What on earth could it be? The horse stopped munching, and stood with arched neck and distended nostrils, with reverted eyes, showing the whites of them, his ears pricked forward, and quivering all over. My big retriever, Rover, who was sharp enough generally, and used to bark furiously on the slightest provocation, gave a yelp of terror, and hid himself in the straw under the manger.

Tap, tap, tap! still the noise went on—a most uncannie sound.

It might be an elf at work, picking himself an outlet through the rocks. It might be some ghostly coffin-maker hammering out a fairy kist for some yet living soul. It might be some vexed demon of the mine working his way with his perilled treasure still farther into the bowels of the earth. It might be any of these; but it could hardly be that any human hands wielded the hammer that rang out these blows into the solemn silent night.

My heart made great thumps against my ribs as I rose and threw open the coach-house door. The noise had stopped; there was nothing to be seen, and yet I half fancied that amongst the fantastic shadows the moonlight threw upon the walls—I half thought, I say—I discerned the outline of a little old man sitting like one who breaks stones by the road, with his hammer uplifted to strike. I went back to the stable and sat down again.

Tap, tap, tap, tap! once more the sound began. Again I rose, took the stable lantern, and went out to search.

But the lantern, throwing its flickering light among the quivering shadows of the trees, and dancing in the quick sparkles of the bubbling spring, flashed too its beams at the very eyes of Master Chanticleer, who, sitting cosily slumbering, pillowed-up by his two most buxom wives, roused at the sight, and, thinking the sun was rising, stretched himself on his perch and crowed lustily.

The tapping ceased all of a sudden, for a cock-crow is like a wet blanket to a fairy; and I heard, or thought I did, a low mournful cry and a sigh, that might have been the wind sighing among the trees.

No, there was nothing in the coach-house to account for the knocking. I was a little unnerved by what I had heard; and after I had locked up the stable I took a few turns on the terrace in front of the house to compose myself. The stream bubbled and sang; a dog in the village barked; there was a lamb bleating plaintively on the hill-side; and listening to these sounds I heard, or thought I heard, too, a faint tap, tap, tapping, like an echo from the far-off hills. It sounded almost like a call to me, an invitation I could scarcely resist. I turned away with a shudder, and into the house, and into my own room, where, as I lay awake listening to the bubble of the stream, I thought, too, I could distinguish still the tap, tap, tapping of the fairy hammer. And it said, Come, come, come! But I put my head under the bedclothes and wouldn't listen to it; and presently I heard a great downpour of rain, which blotted out all other sounds and sent me off into a sound sleep.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### A REVENANT.

NEXT morning the sun was shining brightly, and everything looked so gay and sparkling that I forgot all about my megrims of

the night before. As soon as I was up, I went round to the stable. David, the groom, was hissing and spluttering over the horse, who, tied to a staple by the coach-house door, stood with his legs stretched out, and his head twisted round, trying to see what David was about, grinning at him, and making little futile bites at him every now and then, whenever he came to a ticklish corner.

‘David,’ I cried, ‘why did you go home last night without waiting to take the horse?’

‘Well, indeed, sir,’ said David, standing with the horse’s tail and the curry-comb and brush in his left hand, whilst he wiped his mouth with the back of his right, ‘I did give you up, master.’

‘And what business had you to give me up?’

‘Well, master, if people do not come home by eleven o’clock, it do not look respectable. So I very sure you not come back last night. Yah, sure!’

‘That won’t do, David; you’ve many a time sat up a good deal later for me at the old stables.’

‘Yah,’ said David; ‘at the old stables, but not here.’

‘Well, don’t let me catch you at it again, that’s all, David. Another time, if you go home before I’m back, you can stop there.’

‘Do not be angry, master,’ said David. ‘I do not mind the sitting up for you; no, not one bit, not if you’ll have another stable. This very bad for the horse, very bad. See his coat, master; I can’t get him smooth whatever!’

‘That’s because you don’t put enough elbow-grease on, David. The stable’s well enough.’

‘Well, then, master,’ said David gloomily, ‘I can’t stop.’

‘Very well,’ I said; but I was vexed too; for David was a good useful fellow, and I thought had been rather attached to my service.

‘If you please, master, I want to speak to you,’ cried David, following me as I walked towards the front of the house. ‘Master, I saw John Pugh last night; John with the crooked leg, master!’

‘Nonsense!’ I said.

‘I tell you how it happened, master. I wanted a bucket of water in a hurry; and the spring ran very slow, master, and I took the bucket and walked across the grass—’

‘Where I’ve often told you not to go.’

‘Yes, master. Well, indeed, as I went past the dining-room window, I saw somebody standing there, looking out; and I said to myself, “There’s master come back, sure;” and I thought you beckoned me. But, master, it wasn’t you; it was John, I tell you! Yes, master, in very deed it was, I’m certain sure. Yes, indeed! And I was frightened, and went home.’

‘Rubbish!’ I said. ‘You saw your own face in the glass. What should John Pugh want here?’

‘Why, he lived here once, master. He lived here with Mr.

Weston, the Englishman ; he was his clerk, you know, and servant too ; and that's fifteen years ago now.'

'David,' said I, 'if I hear you telling such foolish stories in the house, I'll—I'll make a mummy of you.'

'Yes, master ; but it's true all the same, and I thought perhaps John had left something behind him, and had come to look for it.'

I was rather disturbed by this story. Not that I cared much about the thing myself, though I confess to a modicum of superstition ; but I didn't want the house to get a bad name. And there was another reason too. But I felt as if I should like to know the whole history of the house, and John Pugh's connection with it ; and I therefore went out after breakfast to have a chat with my friend Tom, the little doctor.

When Tom heard what I wanted he looked rather queer. There was no story that he knew of about Dolydd. What had I been told about it ? Then I told him of the mysterious knocking I had heard, and of the fright David had taken. Still he vowed he knew nothing about it ; and as for John's coming back again after the beautiful funeral he'd had, why it would be a piece of black ingratitude, too great even for that destructive scoundrel ; for Tom had never forgiven him the Sunday smash.

Some days passed, and I had almost forgotten all about our ghostly experiences, when a pony-carriage, driven by a lady in black, drew up at the door. My wife, who was busy making some pies in the kitchen, bolted upstairs in a tremendous hurry to don her company skirt ; and I sneaked off to the stable, hoping that I should escape detection and avoid entering an appearance.

But presently I heard one of the maids tripping out at the back.

'David,' she cried, 'David, bach, have you seen master ?'

'No, indeed,' said David ; 'I think he's gone a-fishing.'

And here I was compelled to reveal myself. I hate anything sneaking ; and though David and Susan weren't paid their wages to be kissing and sweethearting about in my stable-yard, yet I didn't wish to come to any knowledge of their affairs in an underhand kind of way : so I cried,

'Ahum !'

After which there was a dead silence, and then a rapid rustling of skirts flying towards the house. As I walked towards the back door whistling, I met Susan again, as demure as a mouse.

'Please, sir, a lady.'

'Where's your mistress ?'

'O, she don't want to see missis ; she wants you, sir ;' and she gave me a card.

'MRS. WALTER WESTON.'

Lucy met me in the hall, and she was in something of a huff.

‘Ned, are you going to see this person? alone too! I wouldn’t, if I were you. What can she have to say to you that your *wife* is not privileged to hear?’ At this point Lucy looked about six foot ten inches high.

‘But,’ I said, ‘perhaps it’s about a mine.’

‘Ah,’ said Lucy with a bitter sigh, as she saw I had determined to see the lady,—‘ah, a mine, indeed!—and so soon!’

## CHAPTER V.

### A BEWITCHING WIDOW.

WHEN I entered the drawing-room, a lady deeply swathed in black arose, and raising her veil disclosed a face which was still handsome, although time had somewhat dimmed its bloom. She was not draped in widow’s weeds, but in other ways bore herself like a widow, having an insinuating way, and a mode of throwing her eyes over you that was very impressive; and having read her card, and thus knowing her name to be Mrs. Walter Weston, I reasonably came to the conclusion that Walter was dead, and that this was the disconsolate surviving partner.

She was somewhat embarrassed, as though she did not know how to begin her story; and I couldn’t help her, for I was thinking all the while what a row there’d be when she’d gone.

‘Sir,’ she said, ‘you will be surprised that I, a perfect stranger, should seek an interview with—in fact, a perfect stranger.’

‘O, all right!’ I said, in a reassuring way.

‘Mr. Edwards,’ she went on, ‘I was once a tenant of this house under your late uncle, and—my husband was at least—’

The thought occurred to me, perhaps she forgot to pay her rent, and has come back to do it; and I began to feel quite genial.

‘You are aware, no doubt, of the distressing circumstances under which that tenancy terminated.’

‘No,’ I said. Perhaps uncle had put an execution in—it was just like him—and the widow wanted to get something back out of me. I frosted-over suddenly. ‘No, I know nothing about my uncle’s affairs. His executors will be the right persons to go to.’

‘But, Mr. Edwards, this is no mere business matter. You know, I suppose, that my poor husband disappeared about fifteen years ago, and has never been heard of since.’

‘Never heard of since! No; I knew nothing about it.’

‘That is extraordinary. Perhaps I had better detain you, then, whilst I tell you my sad story. You, Mr. Edwards, have only lately come amongst us, or you would know me as the daughter of Griffith Jones of Tanyrallt, a cousin—a distant one—of Mr. Tom Jones the doctor.’



Here I fancied my interesting visitor slightly blushed.

'O, what,' I said, 'are you a friend of Tom's?—why didn't you say so before? Take your things off, and have some luncheon; then I'll introduce you to my wife.'

'Pardon me, dear Mr. Edwards; I am a recluse; I never see the face of man or woman, except—' she added, blushing slightly again, I fancied—'my medical adviser.'

'Tom, of course,' I said.

She inclined her head in assent.

'Let me tell my story first,' she said. 'I was my father's heiress, and did not want—I am old enough now to talk of such things without confusion—did not want suitors. Amongst these my cousin Tom was the favourite; but our love did not run smooth, and Tom and I had a desperate quarrel, and we didn't speak to each other for a year, and then it was only in this way. I was just entering the church to be married, and Tom stood behind a tombstone watching me, and said, "O Madge!" And I think that even then I'd have turned from the church-door and gone with him; but, ah, Mr. Edwards, you know what Tom is now—poor Tom! Well, up to that time there hadn't been a steadier, better, cleverer fellow than Tom in the county Caerinion. But when I turned and looked at him as he stood there watching me into the church—yes, Mr. Edwards, he was drunk! Then I turned to the little old man who was to be my husband—a clean neat little fellow—I turned to him with positive relief. But it was my fault, Mr. Edwards; I've only myself to blame. I found out afterwards why he'd married me—this rich Englishman. My father owned the whole of the mountain above his farm, and he—my husband—had discovered, or thought he had, a gold-mine there. From the very day we married, his thoughts, his talk, were of nothing else. All day long he'd be on the mountain, and he'd bring home great bags full of stones, and half the night long he'd sit in his workshop—you've turned it into a coach-house now, I see, Mr. Edwards—he'd sit there tap-tap-tapping with his hammer and his stones, till the sound used nearly to drive me to distraction. But he was a kind good old man, and I was not unhappy—not very. But his money went by degrees; a good deal of it in this gold-seeking of his, a good deal in other people's mines; it all went at last. He was reduced to his last sixpence, and then came to me one day and said, "Margaret, I am going away for two days. I am a ruined man, and yet I think I have made a discovery which will make me boundlessly rich. At the end of two days, if I don't come back, go to your father's house; this place will be in the hands of my creditors." From that day to this—fifteen years—I haven't seen or heard of him. I was a girl then; I'm an old woman now. I won't conceal from you, Mr. Edwards, that if I had certain proof that my poor husband was dead, I'd marry

Tom. It would be a dreadful risk, but I'd chance it. I've shattered his life—poor Tom!—and if I could, I'd try and mend it. But till I hear from him, or of him—my husband, Walter Weston—till I know assuredly that he is dead, I'll never marry—never.'

'And he used to work at night, did he,' I cried, 'tap-tap-tapping with a hammer?'

'O, yes,' said Mrs. Weston; 'and he'd have a bowl with water by his side, and when he'd pounded his stones he'd put the powder into the bowl; and sometimes, when there wasn't a speck of gold in it all, he'd moan so that I could hear him from the back door where I used to stand and watch for him; for it was very lonely,' she whispered, shuddering; 'and then I'd go and bring him in.'

'Did he wear a round-topped cap with a broad peak, like a German, and was he a little old man with a Roman nose and a round back?'

'He was,' cried Mrs. Weston. 'O, have you seen him or heard anything?'

That was the shadow I had seen on the wall; but I wouldn't tell her. 'It must have been a photograph or portrait I've seen of him,' I cried; 'I know nothing more of him.'

'But Tom said to me,' cried Mrs. Weston eagerly—'he came to me yesterday so excited, and said, "Go to Edward Edwards; he will set your mind at rest about poor Walter."'

'He was wrong,' I said; 'I know nothing about him.'

## CHAPTER VI.

### TO BE LEFT TILL CALLED FOR.

It was an unfortunate thing for me, that visit of Mrs. Weston; I'd no peace after it. I couldn't tell Lucy what she'd come about; she'd enjoined the strictest secrecy upon me; and indeed my wife was in that delicate state of health in which the trouble and mystery involved in the story of Mrs. Weston, and the spirit-knocking I had heard, would have had the worst effect. Perforce I held my tongue, and refused to tell her the purport of my interview with the veiled lady in black, and this seemed to come always between us and keep us apart. You may say, perhaps, that surely it would have been better to tell her all about it, and that an imaginary trouble is easier to bear than a real grievance. But I didn't think so then, and don't now; for I've noticed that, to women, a real substantial grievance and sense of wrong is a kind of fillip that stimulates rather than depresses them; whilst the environment of fancied evils, the morbid dread of unknown powers, slacken the very pulses of life, relax and tangle all the complicated tracery of the nervous system. But to me, who hate hot water—except at night over a pipe with something strong—to me all this misunderstanding and mystery was a

real torment. I got quite melancholy over the affair, and wandered about, the very shadow of myself.

And the knocking went on. No sooner did midnight come, Lucy in bed, the house quiet, and all still, than this tap, tap, tapping commenced.

Sometimes from the coach-house, which abutted on the house, but more often from the opposite hills. Often, after a day's storm, when the night was clear perhaps and fine, and the stars twinkling and sparkling, as I sat by my fire at midnight, smoking a gloomy pipe and thinking over my affairs—which were not over prosperous, for there was a heavy mortgage on Dolydd, and I was already out-running my income—often I'd fancy I heard a faint and distant knocking, and throwing open the window, I'd hear it more plainly, tap-atap-tap, a small and feeble sound, which yet seemed to me still to be a call or invitation. I can't describe to you the feeling that came over me when I heard that fairy tapping. It was as though I felt I must leave everything, sleeping wife and quiet household, the horse that clanked his chain, the dogs that whined in their uneasy dreams,—leave them all, and go up into the mountains.

But the knocking in the coach-house gave me more definite cause of complaint; for I had made up my mind that I must retrench ere long. As soon as my wife was well over her confinement, I'd sell off the horse and the carriage, and I'd let Dolydd furnished, and go and live cheaply at some place where we weren't known. Then, if it got about that Dolydd was haunted, farewell to the hope of letting it at a good rental. Altogether I got so worried and exasperated, that one night, when the knocking had been worse than usual, I sat down and determined I'd write a letter to Mrs. Walter Weston about the matter. It was all very well to think of her feelings, but here was the house likely to fall off in value; and, after all, the man had been only a yearly tenant, and had no right to haunt the place like this. Had it been John MapEinion, my illustrious ancestor, indeed, who had taken it into his head to revisit the scenes of his former prowess, I should have been the last man to interfere with him. But that this Englishman, who owed a quarter's rent too into the bargain, as I had since found from my poor uncle's books, though I was too chivalrous to say anything about it to the widow,—that this mining Englishman should hang about, deteriorating the value of the property, was a thing not to be borne. Still I was foolish to write to the widow. I see it now; but I did it under the impulse of passion, and am not to be blamed for it. But I ought to have burnt the blotting-paper, and I forgot; for I write a good bold hand, and I'm sure my wife found the address on the blotting-paper next morning. She didn't say anything; but if she was cold before, she was a thought colder now, and watched me intently.

Now what I wrote to the widow was just this. I told her of the

cruel way in which the house was haunted by her late husband, and that I really could stand it no longer. Then, as I was writing, a brilliant thought struck me. If Weston were dead—and there could be no doubt of that from his way of going on—there could be no possible reason why Tom and the widow shouldn't marry; and if I were the means of bringing them together, the least they could do would be to take Dolydd off my hands. It would just suit them for size, and any little unpleasantness there might be about the knocking wouldn't matter a bit, being all in the family, as you may say. Being an impulsive fellow, I stuck all this down just as it came into my head, and asked the widow to reply to me—not to my house; there that reading-over-the-shoulder business, don't you see, came in again—but to Mr. Williams, Post-office. That was a bit of policy again; for Lucy's father was called Williams, and he used often to run down to see us, being a merchant at Liverpool, and always had his letters directed Post-office; so that there would be nothing strange in my calling to ask for letters for him. Altogether I managed the matter beautifully, if it hadn't been for that oversight about the blotting-paper, which was such a simple self-evident thing that I couldn't be expected to think of it.

Next morning, then, Lucy still being very cross—I didn't mind it so much, for I intended to surprise her all at once by telling her how Dolydd was haunted, and how I'd let the house at a good rent, and was going to take her straight off to Aberystwith to recover her strength; she loves the sea, does Lucy;—and would then and there leave this gloomy old place, which I was beginning to hate,—only, you see, I couldn't do this till the event she was expecting had come off: till then I must keep all this religiously a secret;—next morning, then, I started off to explore one of the mountains opposite; for I hadn't forgotten Baker's letter, and I knew there were some veins of copper cropping out about there. But I found nothing to reward my pains; and was returning homewards tired and hungry, when I stopped on the crest of a hill, to admire the prospect spread around me. I smiled as I recognised the old man's head,—a mountain which resembled, as I have said, a man's face with a Roman nose, his mouth wide open, slumbering peaceably; but I started as I observed, which I had never done before, that just over the forehead of the face there was visible a cairn which crowned the summit of a farther hill. The Ordnance-survey people had topped this cairn with a beam of timber, and it stood out sharp and defined against the evening sky almost like a horn. Then in an instant the idea came into my head: if I were standing where the cairn on the farther hill would appear just over the old man's mouth, then this mountain would exactly resemble in profile the drawing on Jack Pugh's slate—that of a face with the tongue sticking out of the mouth.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE MINE IS SPRUNG.

ALL night long I was haunted by the old man of the mountain; all night long I saw him in my dreams moping and gibing at me; his tongue, which somehow seemed jointed and like the tail of a scorpion, wagging merrily against me; and round about the mountainous old man danced in a circle madly a confused and yet orderly array of all kinds of witches and warlocks. Conspicuous among the ghosts and fiends was John Pugh, bearing affixed to his breast the hieroglyphic slate, and a little old man with a hammer, who constantly strove to break it; but Pugh preserved it intact, and once, when in the gyrations of the mazy dance he passed me almost close, he flourished the slate before my eyes, and I saw that it was now in the likeness of a gravestone, and bore sculptured upon it a couple of blooming angels and 'Sacred to the Memory of John Pugh.'

Perhaps, after all, I said to myself when I awoke, John indeed is only come back to remind me that we didn't put a gravestone over him. It wasn't in the bond, you see; the funeral didn't include any monumental arrangements, but John might think himself entitled to a slab all the same. But the dream made me think seriously about the slate and the figures on it, and I made up my mind I'd go and search for a spot where I should see the old man's head with the tongue sticking out at the mouth, without any more delay; indeed, immediately after breakfast.

First of all, I must go down and inquire if there was any letter for me at the Post-office; I mean for 'Mr. Williams.' I felt a little guilty as I stole out of the house and towards the town. It wasn't so long since Lucy and I had exchanged vows that, come what would, we would never have a secret from each other; and here, ere the first year of our married life was over, was I embarking on a career of duplicity to which I could see no end.

'Any letters for Mr. Williams?' I said with assumed carelessness, but feeling like a villain all the time.

'He's got 'em,' cried John Jones, the postmaster. 'Ah, you didn't expect the old gentleman this morning; he told me he was going to give you a little surprise. Uncommonly well he's looking, Mr. Edwards; yes, indeed! But I don't think you're looking quite the thing,' he added, after a pause.

I felt yellow all over—yellow and decrepit. And yet I must exert myself—I must try and intercept him. 'How long has he been gone, Jones?'

'O, about ten minutes,' said the postmaster. 'You must have come round Penbryn, or you'd have met him.'

I hardly know how I reached home. When I came to the gate



of the drive I saw a picture which struck me with fear and remorse. It was a beautiful morning of early summer. All the trees were in most luxuriant leaf; the thrushes were carolling, the blackbirds warbling from the wood. Under a majestic oak, which grew not far from the margin of the stream, a rustic bench was set, a rustic table laid. The bright silver of the breakfast equipage, the snowy cloth, Lucy's light morning muslin, the old gentleman's snowy shirt-front, lit-up that little corner hedged-in by shrubs, and fairly sparkled and shimmered in the sunlight. Lucy, I could see, was in high good humour, and laughed merrily as she busied herself about the breakfast-table. Williams, his letters spread out before him, was opening them leisurely one after the other, reading and laying them aside. And there, like a serpent coiled among the leaves of this fair Paradise, was the fatal missive. I could see it at once—the broad black-edged envelope, the puzzled look that overcast the beaming countenance of the reader. I shouted, but nobody heard me; indeed, my voice was almost gone in my agitation. He had opened it, read it; he threw it over to my wife.

I didn't become insensible; I didn't turn and fly; I simply walked up to the breakfast-table and said, 'How d'ye do, Mr. Williams?'

'Why, Ned,' he said, 'you're looking queer. What ails you, my boy? Walking too far before breakfast, eh? Bad plan that.—What, Lucy, going in?'

'I don't feel very well, papa,' she said, and swept past me, putting into my hands as she went by the black-edged letter.

'Ha,' said old Williams jocosely; 'I opened one of your letters just now by accident; at least, it wasn't by accident, because it was addressed to me. How did that happen, I wonder? Lady too, eh? Ned, what are you about?'

I put the bole of the oak-tree between us before I read the letter. It began:

'My dear Mr. Edwards,'—yes, I can swear it was 'My dear Mr. Edwards,' although, looking at it one way, you might have read it for 'My dearest Edward,' owing to the scratchy hand she wrote, like most women,—'My dear Mr. Edwards,—Your letter revived within me a glow of feelings and sensibilities that I thought I had buried in the grave. We may yet be happy, I begin to hope. The only obstacle to our union may, under Providence, be removed. But I must have the evidence of my own senses before I can fully believe what you tell me. We must arrange for a meeting to test the reality of your impressions. The thought of leaving this enforced celibate life, and coming to live at Dolydd with *you know whom*, is almost too much joy for yours ever,

GWENDOLEN.'

And poor Lucy had read this letter! What on earth should I do?

## THE LIGHT OF THE EARTH

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LIGHT is the symbol of all that is highest and purest in the human mind,—of all that is most brilliant, joyous, and life-giving in external nature. It is synonymous with the day, with life, with enjoyment; while its opposite is the symbol of night, of evil, and of death. Is it wonderful, then, that Light should have been an object of adoration, a symbol of the Deity, in the ancient world,—especially in that purest of Pagan religions which grew up on the hills of Persia? or that, as an interesting and beautiful mystery, it should have engaged the thoughts of some of the highest intellects of modern times? At the present time, more than ever, the solar orb, by far the grandest source of light that meets the eye of man, is receiving special attention from the scientific world; every spot on his surface, every change in his aspect, is watched by a hundred telescopes, and the new art of photography lends its aid to record the solar phenomena.

But we must not always look so high, or disregard the many curious and significant phenomena of light which belong to our own planet, this nether world, the stage on which our brief existence is spent. Myriads of strange phenomena of this sparkling exhalation of Matter surround us, not only beautiful in themselves, but full of mysteries which, if solved, would lead to the discovery of important cosmical truths. In previous articles—where we have maintained that all the planets are luminous as well as (though, from their inferior size, much less than) the sun and stars—we have already treated of terrestrial light in its grander phases: let us turn our gaze from the far-off skies, with their unapproachable wonders, and look at some of the bright mysteries at our feet,—the light-emitting power which pervades the earth's surface, and many of the beings and objects which tenant it. It is a study that will prove interesting, even as a pleasant pastime,—as light reading for the hour, apart from the curious inferences to which it leads.

Let us speak, then, first of the Light of the Earth as it appears in its minor manifestations. Alike in the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral worlds—in living organisms and in dead matter—on land, by sea, and in the twilight air—everywhere, if we do but look for it, we find instances of a native and unborrowed light of the earth. It may dance before us as a will-o'-the-wisp, displaying vagaries which science cannot yet explain, but of which testimony leaves no doubt. It may gleam from the glow-worms under the

hedge-rows; or it may flash through the twilight air like falling stars, as the fire-flies dart after one another in amorous play. It may gleam like pale moonshine on the calm sea, or glitter like sparks of fire on the crests of the troubled waves. It may leap in tiny jets of flame from the flowers of the garden, or gleam with cold radiance from the tendrils of subterranean plants on the damp rocky walls of the mine. Is it a mere fable, so old and so prevalent, that it also appears in ghostly guise as the 'corpse-candles' of the Welsh, flickering above churchyards; or is seen, with foreboding light, in the house of sickness, like the 'elf-candles' of the Scotch, betokening coming death? Nay, more: whatever may be thought of the 'Od-light' of the animal magnetists, does it not appear at times as a real and unmistakable luminous efflux from the human body, alike in health and in mortal sickness?

Will-o'-the-wisp has sometimes been set down as a rank impostor, and jokes were recently made at his expense in large type in the *Times*: but despite the anathema hurled against this luminous vagabond, the 'mad fire' still flickers his brief hours of existence over marsh and fen. One fine summer evening, as two gentlemen were passing a large reedy pool near Dunoon, in Argyleshire, they were startled by seeing 'several lights flitting across the surface of the pond, from one sedgy part of it to another. The lights were precisely like the light of a common candle, not larger and not smaller; and they appeared to leap from place to place, and then vanish, just as if one threw a candle across the pond and it fell into the water.'\* This is the true will-o'-the-wisp,—the normal appearance of the fiery madcap whose pranks have figured in many a rustic story. But there are other forms of the same phenomenon—lambent flames, which remain steady above certain spots, but which either disappear when approached, or which, more curiously, recede as the beholder pursues them. Of this kind was the light seen several times by M. Beccari and a friend of his, on the stony banks of the Rio Verde, ten miles south of Bologna. It appeared as a rectangular body of light, about a foot in length, hovering about two feet above the stones. Its radiance was so strong, that he could plainly see by it the water of the river, and a part of the neighbouring hedge; but the light became paler as he approached, and vanished when he reached the spot. Again, as regards the lambent flames of the Pietra Mala, likewise on the high road between Florence and Bologna, Sir Roundell Palmer bears witness, that 'he saw the flames issuing from the ground (in a common ploughed field) over a space of no great extent;' but in this case the flames did not vanish at his approach, for he 'lighted sticks, &c. at them.'† Such a witness is unimpeachable. Doubtless the great lawyer mentally subjected the strange light to a rigorous

\* Letter in the *Times*, in the spring of 1863.

† Ibid.

cross-examination, and cited great authorities against its existence; but even he could not resist the evidence of its reality, furnished by the combustion of the sticks which he exposed to its influence. The vanishing of some of those lights when approached, and the recedence of others, are curious facts not yet explained. Mr. Blesson was sorely tried by a fugitive light of this sort, in the valley of Gorbitz; but he was not to be beaten, and, by remaining some days near the spot, he at length succeeded in lighting a piece of paper at the fugitive flame.

But there are other forms of the *ignis fatuus*, so extraordinary as not only to baffle science, but to stagger belief. One light of this kind, seen by Dr. Weissenborn, travelled over a distance of half a mile in less than a second! What made it fly? how could it fly? It seems more like a shooting-star close to the ground, or a little terrestrial comet, than a congener of the gas-born will-o'-the-wisp. And what shall we say of the luminous body which appeared to Dr. Shaw and his party in the valley of Ephraim, and which kept them company for more than an hour? It danced about them in strange vagaries, 'as if a spirit rode the flame.' Sometimes it appeared globular; at others, it diffused itself around the travelling party, involving them in a pale and innocuous light; then it contracted itself,—then would disappear for a minute,—then appeared again. Sometimes it ran swiftly along the ground, and ever and anon it expanded itself so as to cover two or three acres of the adjoining mountains. A marvellous vagabond, truly!

Next let us come to less puzzling and comparatively familiar phenomena. Stroll forth on a fine summer evening among our charming lanes and lawns, and there we may often see tiny lights, of yellow-green hue, sparkling beneath the hedgerows, like the lamps of some fairy festival. These are the glow-worms, among the dry grass and fallen leaves,—yet nothing takes fire. Once we tried to light a 'Vesuvian' at the tiny fire, with sundry forebodings lest we should destroy the pretty insect in the half-expected combustion; but the attempt was vain. There was no heat there—not a particle: only light! Or if you spend your summer holiday in southern Europe, you will see a prettier sight, as insects of a kindred nature, the fire-flies, dart in zigzag courses through the evening air, as if the stars were shooting to and fro around you. It was once a custom among the Italian youths to decorate their sweethearts' hair with these 'diamonds of the night'—an inexpensive ornament, yet surpassing in brilliance the famed gems of the Golconda mine.

These winged lucifers, like the glow-worms, belong to the animal world; but the vegetable world also has its luminous wonders. Stroll among the olive-groves of the same Italian clime, and growing at the foot of some of the trees you will find a red mushroom, which throws out during the night a blue light, which spreads si-

lently around it; and even when detached from the tree, the plant continues to emit light for several nights. But the most remarkable of these 'vegetable glow-worms' is the plant (*Rhizomorpha subterranea*) which decks the dreary solitude of mines, where not a ray of daylight can enter. In some of our English coal-mines the plant is said to give a light sufficient to enable one to read ordinary print. But nowhere is this vegetable luminosity more beautifully seen than in some of the German mines (as in Hesse), where the tendrils of the plant spread over the walls of the air-galleries, and illuminate them with a pale light, as if moonbeams were stealing through narrow crevices into the gloomy mine.

The light-emitting power is also found, though in lesser degree and apparently of a different kind, in a higher order of the vegetable world. A young Swedish damsel, the daughter of the great Linnæus, was fond of amusing herself in the summer twilight by setting fire to the inflammable atmosphere which envelopes the essential-oil glands of certain *fraxinellæ*: and one sultry summer evening when seated in the garden, she was surprised to see luminous radiations emitted by the flowers of a group of nasturtiums; and she witnessed the same spectacle on several subsequent evenings.\* Several naturalists have observed the same phenomenon, and almost exclusively upon yellow or orange-coloured flowers—such as the sun-flower, poppies, the marigold, and the orange-lily. Two interesting observations of such luminous flowers are thus described by Dr. Phipson:

'The Swedish naturalist, Professor Haggern, perceived, one evening, a faint flash of light dart repeatedly from a marigold. Surprised at such an uncommon appearance, he resolved to examine it with attention; and to be assured that it was no deception, he placed a man near him, with orders to make a signal when he observed the light. They both saw it constantly at the same moment. The light was most brilliant upon marigolds of an orange or flame colour; but scarcely visible upon pale ones. The flash was frequently seen on the same flower two or three times in quick succession, but more commonly at intervals of several minutes. When several flowers, in the same place, emitted their light together, it could be seen at a considerable distance. This phenomenon was remarked in July and August, at sunset, and for half an hour, when the sky was clear; but after a rainy day, or when the air was loaded with vapours, nothing of it was to be seen.

'On the 18th of June 1857, about ten o'clock in the evening, M. Th. Fries, the well-known Swedish botanist, whilst walking alone in the Botanic Garden at Upsal, remarked a group of poppies (*Papaver orientale*), in which three or four flowers emitted little flashes of light. Forewarned as he was by a knowledge that such things had been observed by others, he could not help believing that he

\* In June and July 1762.



was suffering from an optical illusion. However, the flashes continued showing themselves, from time to time, during three-quarters of an hour. M. Fries was thus forced to believe that what he saw was real. The next day, observing the same phenomenon to recur at about the same hour, he conducted to the place a person entirely ignorant that such a manifestation of light had ever been witnessed in the vegetable world; and without relating anything concerning it, he brought his companion before the group of poppies. The latter observer was soon in raptures of astonishment and admiration. Many other persons were then led to the same spot, some of whom immediately remarked that "the flowers were throwing out flames."

As will be observed from the above instances, the emission of light from flowers occurs chiefly in the months of June and July, and during the twilight—between sunset and the time when full darkness sets in. In some cases these sparks or flashes have also been observed in the morning, just before sunrise. The phenomenon is always most brilliant before a thunderstorm. It is also said that some flowers always emit light at the periods of floration and fecundation; at which periods, as has lately been found, the temperature of the petals rises above the ordinary point.

The sea has its wonders of luminosity as well as the land. Embark on the bright and tranquil waters of the Mediterranean, and at night the surface of the deep may be seen, at times, sparkling with light, as it breaks on the prow or sides of the ship, or gleams around with a pale hue of luminous white. This marine illumination is not generated by the sea itself, but proceeds from some classes of its tiniest inhabitants. Foremost among these are the little beings which are classed under the genus *Noctiluca*. Humboldt tells us, that after bathing in the waters of the Pacific, his body remained luminous for a whole hour, owing to the *noctiluca* with which it was covered. These little creatures, as may be imagined, are exceedingly minute; yet one species, which is seldom as large as the head of the smallest pin, 'offers to the microscopical investigator of nature the magnificent spectacle of a starry firmament reflected in the sea.' These tiny creatures are sometimes found in such prodigious numbers in the damp sand at Ostend, that on raising a handful of it, the sand appears like molten lava. 'If a few tea-spoonfuls of *noctiluca*,' says Dr. Phipson, 'be collected upon a filter, the light they emit is powerful enough to enable one to read at a distance of nine inches and a half.' But, like the luminosity of the glow-worm and firefly, there is no heat in their light. 'When the bulb of a small and very sensitive thermometer is plunged into this little heap of *noctiluca*, it is found that, although these small beings are in full life, not the slightest elevation of temperature can be observed during the emission of their light.' Upwards of a hundred different species of marine

animals are known to possess a light-emitting power during life, rendering the waters of the ocean more or less luminous in every latitude. The phosphorescence of the *Medusa pellucens* is described as resembling a flash of lightning; and some small crustacea, not luminous in their normal condition, have been observed, when they are irritated, to give forth very bright flashes of light.

In all these cases the luminosity is emitted when the creature is alive. But many kinds of fish, which can make no claim to luminosity when in life, become brilliantly phosphorescent after death. Mackerels and herrings especially, when their dead bodies are exposed for a short time to the air, become luminous in the dark, and have often appalled some rustic youngster by their strange phosphoric glitter as they hang outside a cottage door. Stretch forth your hand and touch them, and you will find your fingers covered with a greasy substance, and luminous, as if rubbed with phosphorus. If this greasy substance be separated from the dead fish, and placed on a plate of glass, it continues to shine in the dark. But, as in all the other cases of phosphorescence, there is no heat—only light. When these dead fish are placed in sea-water, in a few days' time they render it luminous,—evidently from the luminous grease permeating the surrounding liquid; moreover, the water shines everywhere with equal lustre, and suffers no diminution of its luminosity by being passed through a sieve. Water which has thus been rendered luminous loses its transparency, looks milky, and acquires a disagreeable odour; and its phosphorescence may last for four or five days.

Dead animal matter of all kinds occasionally becomes phosphorescent. Peep some winter's night into the larder, and perchance you will see—as Dr. Boyle once saw—a neck of veal gleaming all over with spots of light. You may fancy, as most people do, that this phosphorescence is a sign of decomposition, and that both the veal and the gleaming herring or mackerel ought to be thrown away. But this is a mistake: for it is a remarkable fact, that this luminosity from dead animal matter always shows itself *before* decay begins, and either ceases at once or rapidly diminishes as soon as chemical decomposition sets in. We may add, that not a vestige of infusoria or other animalculæ is to be found in this luminous matter when examined under the microscope.

Hitherto we have found luminosity, a power of emitting light, only in comparatively low organisms,—in the flowers of the garden and plants of the mine, in the glow-worm and fireflies, in the insects of the sea, and in dead animal matter. Let us now view the same phenomenon in higher organisations. The best-known instance of this kind is the luminosity, in the form of a series of sparks, given forth by the fur of the cat when rubbed; and a similar spectacle is occasionally witnessed during the currying of a horse. Rennger

states that he has seen the eyes of a monkey so brilliant, in a dark room, that they illuminated objects at the distance of half a foot; and Carus maintains that men of science are wrong in attributing to the effects of reflected light that peculiar scintillation which is more or less observable in the eyes of dogs, cats, tigers, &c.

A far more important and really startling phenomenon of light-emission occurs, in rare instances, in the highest of all known organisms, Man himself. The only common, or at least by no means uncommon, case of this kind, is the emission of sparks from the hair when combed. Before and during the electrical 'dust-storms' in India, this phenomenon is of frequent occurrence in the hair of both sexes. Neither is it uncommon in our own country, especially in dry weather, and when the hair also is dry,—but most of all, immediately previous to thunderstorms. Dr. Phipson mentions the case of a relative of his, 'whose hair (exactly one yard and a quarter long), when combed somewhat rapidly with a black gutta-percha comb, emits sheets of light upwards of a foot in length,' the light being 'composed of hundreds of small electric sparks, the snapping noise of which is distinctly heard.'\* We know several individuals who never apply a small-toothed comb (which produces greater friction than the larger kind) without eliciting a crackling sound, audible to others as well as to themselves,—indicating the production of electric sparks, which would be visible in a dark room.

But electric light is sometimes given off by the human body itself, not merely from the hair. A memorable instance of this rare phenomenon is recorded by Dr. Kane, in the journal of his last voyage to the Polar regions. He and a companion, Petersen, had gone to sleep in a hut, amidst intense cold, and on awaking during the night found, to their horror, that their lamp (their only hope) had gone out. Petersen tried in vain to get light from a pocket-pistol; and then Kane resolved to take the pistol himself. 'It was so intensely dark,' he says, 'that I had to grope for it; and in so doing, I touched his hand. At that instant the pistol (in Petersen's hand) became distinctly visible. A pale-bluish light, slightly tremulous, but not broken, covered the metallic parts of it—the barrel, lock, and trigger. The stock too was distinctly visible, as if by the reflected light; and to the amazement of both of us, the thumb and two fingers with which Petersen was holding it—the creases, wrinkles, and circuit of the nails being clearly defined upon the skin. As I took the pistol, my hand became illuminated also.'

This luminous and doubtless electric phenomenon took place in highly exceptional circumstances,—during as intense cold as the human frame can endure, and while the bodies of the two Arctic voyagers were encased in clothing chosen expressly for its non-conducting properties. And it is the only case of the kind recorded in

\* Letter published in the *Standard* newspaper in the spring of 1863.

recent times. But a far more remarkable phenomenon of a similar kind is recorded by Bartholin, who gives an account of a lady in Italy, whom he rightly styles '*mulier splendens*,' whose body became phosphorescent—or rather, shone with electric radiations—when slightly rubbed with a piece of dry linen. This is a far more remarkable case than that narrated by Dr. Kane; for, in this instance, the luminosity appears to have been normal, certainly very frequent under ordinary circumstances. However rare such a phenomenon may be, the fact is well attested; and a personal experience enables us to say that there is nothing improbable in it. During the long and severe winter of 1837-8, when I was a student in Edinburgh, the cold was so steady and intense, that there was skating on the neighbouring lochs for six weeks in unbroken succession. Although the lochs (especially the one which we most frequented) were deep, the ice was so safe—upwards of a foot in thickness—that we often used to skate until midnight by the moonlight, playing games on the frozen surface. At that time, when undressing at night, the cold in my attic-room being intense, I used instinctively to rub my under-clothing of flannel against my body, for the sake of the heat, before committing myself to the cold sheets: and on such occasions I used to hear distinctly a *crickling* sound, though it did not on my part excite any special attention. But one night, when I had no candle, I was surprised to see that when my hand touched the flannels after they had been rubbed against my skin, blue sparks were given off, similar in appearance to those from an electrical machine. Night after night, during the frost, I tried the experiment, and always with the same result: as my hand swept the flannel, a flood of blue sparks was emitted—far greater in extent, but exactly similar in kind, to those which can be elicited from a cat's back, and accompanied by the same crickling noise. I found moreover that the flannel was so highly charged, that the phenomenon could be three times repeated—the flood of blue sparks growing feebler each time.

I know that I am unusually sensitive to electrical influence; and I remember that on one occasion I was made ill for a week in consequence of taking an over-dose of electricity during experiments at the chemistry class. After the ordinary experiments of shock-taking, in which most of the class joined, three of us (mainly by way of brag) volunteered to take heavier shocks; and after forty turns of the large cylinder, we stood the shock, and asked for more. Our professor, Dr. Hugo Reid, strongly objected, but at last assented. We three now stood like heroes amidst a circle formed by the class; sixty turns of the cylinder were given; and then (I was in the middle) my comrade on the right touched the machine, and the shock ensued. I was forced down almost on my knees, and my elbows were driven in against my sides with tremendous force; but my comrade on the left was pitched out and away from me full-length

on the floor. No immediate effects were felt by me ; but on my way home, an hour or two afterwards, I felt weak and perspiring (although in winter), and for a week afterwards I was sufficiently out of sorts to give me an excuse (always acceptable then) for absence from my classes. As regards the emission of electric sparks, I never looked for them, or, until recently, thought of them, after the winter when they were so strikingly developed ; and the only time when my attention was again challenged to the phenomenon was in November 1861, immediately previous to a thunderstorm.

Luminous emanations from the human body, so far as recorded instances go, are very rare ; but they appear to be more frequent in disease—generally mortal disease—than in health. In the rich store of facts contained in Dr. Phipson's book on *Phosphorescence*, the only cases given of such luminosity occurring in health are the two which we have mentioned, namely, that of Dr. Kane and of Bartholin's *mulier splendens* ; although we are inclined to think that such cases are by no means so rare as is at present believed. Of luminosity developed by the human body during severe sickness or approaching death, Dr. Phipson, as the result of his reading, gives three instances. One of these is that of a woman in Milan, during whose illness a so-called phosphoric light glimmered about her bed. This light, it is said, fled from the hand which approached it, and was at length entirely dispersed by a current of air. The woman recovered. In the two other cases the illness was mortal. In the first which we shall quote, the strange luminosity occurred on the very eve of dissolution ; in the second (that of a consumptive patient) the phenomenon was witnessed a good while before death, yet not necessarily before dissolution had commenced ; for 'consumption,' as the term implies, is a slow process of dissolution.

Let us give these two remarkable cases. The first is recorded by Dr. Marsh,\* who gives the following statement in the exact words of his informant :

'About an hour and a half before my sister's death, we were struck by luminous appearances proceeding from her head in a diagonal direction. She was at the time in a half-recumbent position, and perfectly tranquil. *The light was pale as the moon*, but quite evident to mamma, myself, and sisters, who were watching over her at the time. One of us at first thought it was lightning, till shortly afterwards we perceived a sort of *tremulous glimmer* playing around the head of the bed ; and then, recollecting that we had read something of a similar nature having been observed previous to dissolution, we had candles brought into the room, fearing our dear sister would perceive it [the luminosity], and that it might disturb the tranquillity of her last moments.'

The other case relates to an Irish peasant, and is recorded from

\* *Essay upon the Evolution of Light from the Human Subject.*



personal observation by Dr. Donovan in the *Dublin Medical Press*, in 1840, as follows :

‘ I was sent for to see Harrington in December 1828. He had been under the care of my predecessor, and had been entered in the Dispensary-book as a phthisical patient ; and I find, on referring to my note-book, that the stethoscopic and other indications of phthisis were indubitable. He was under my care for about five years, during which time the symptoms continued stationary ; and I had discontinued my attendance for about two years, when the report became general that *mysterious lights* were seen every night in his cabin. The subject attracted a great deal of attention.

‘ I determined to submit the matter to the ordeal of my own senses ; and for this purpose I visited the cabin for fourteen nights. On three nights only did I witness anything unusual. Once I perceived a *luminous fog*, resembling the aurora borealis ; and twice I saw *scintillations, like the sparkling phosphorescence exhibited by sea infusoria*. From the close scrutiny I made, I can with certainty say that no imposition was either employed or attempted.’

The various kinds of earth-light which we have now described are certainly strange phenomena. Some of them—such as the kind of *ignis fatuus* seen by Weissenborn and by Dr. Shaw—I cannot venture to explain, even by conjecture. But the main body of them, I think, may be explained under three categories, as gaseous, phosphoric, and electrical. To the first class belong the ordinary forms of the *ignis fatuus*, or will-o’-the-wisp, whether as a glimmering light overhanging the surface of the ground (as in the instances recorded by Beccari and Sir R. Palmer), or as darting lights shooting over the stagnant pool, as seen by the two gentlemen near Dunoon. It is the result of a gaseous exhalation (in most cases carburetted hydrogen) from the earth, which takes fire or becomes luminous when mingling with the oxygen of the atmosphere. To the second class belongs the luminosity of the glow-worm and fire-fly, of the light-emitting plants of the mine, the *infusoria* of the sea, and of dead fish and animal matter. These are ‘phosphoric ;’ but the real cause of phosphorescence is yet unknown. So far as has yet been ascertained, it is found (as in the glow-worm) to be emitted from a fatty substance ; and this substance, I venture to conjecture, will be found to resemble the marrow of the spinal cord and ganglions in vertebrate animals. To the third or electrical class of these phenomena belong the luminous emissions from flowers, from the ‘electric cels’ and some other fishes, and also from the human body when in a state of health. These electrical phenomena differ in appearance from the phosphoric in this respect, that in the one case the light is emitted by flashes or sparks, and in the other by a steady luminosity. Of the luminous radiations from dying persons we hesitate in offering an explanation ; but it seems to us as if this luminosity

were occasioned by an efflux or escape of the nerve-force (which is known to be kindred in its nature to electricity), transmuting itself into luminosity as it leaves the body.

In conclusion, as regards some of the grander forms of terrestrial light, developed not by particular objects or substances on its surface, but by the earth itself, we may mention the phenomenon witnessed by Parry, at night, in the Arctic Sea. An arch of light, in the form of a horse-shoe, appeared ahead of his ship: as the vessel sailed onward towards one limb of the arch, the luminosity did not recede, as the rainbow does; the ship became illuminated while passing through it, and relapsed into darkness again on the farther side. Of the magnificent radiations of light from the Poles, visible in our northern hemisphere as the aurora borealis, we need hardly speak, as the phenomenon is very frequent in this country. But, as it is a much-questioned point whether any sound ever accompanies this remarkable evolution of light, I may mention that on one occasion in Edinburgh, late in the night and when the streets were perfectly silent, I remember (it is fully twenty years ago), as I stood watching the spectacle in the open air, I distinctly heard a fluttering—or, rightly to describe the sound, a *fluffering*—sound accompanying the coruscations, as they rose and spread fan-like, in tremulous waves, from the horizon to the zenith.

Finally, as regards the zodiacal light. As the opinion which we have to advance is entirely new, and as the light itself is rarely visible, let us first describe the phenomenon. Though it has doubtless been in existence for thousands of years, the earliest recorded observation of the zodiacal light is given by a countryman of our own, Childney, who, in his *Britannia Baconica*, published in 1661, speaks of it thus: ‘In February, and for a little before and a little after that month (as I have observed several years together), about six in the evening, when the twilight hath almost deserted the horizon, you shall see a plainly discernible *way of the twilight* striking up [from the horizon] towards the Pleiades, and seeming almost to touch them. There is no such way [or path of light] to be observed at any other time of the year (that I can perceive), nor any other way at that time to be perceived darting up [from the earth] elsewhere.’ The fullest description of the phenomenon is that given by Humboldt, who, in his long wanderings in tropical regions, had many opportunities of observing it to advantage. In his *Cosmos* he says: ‘Those who have lived for many years in the zone of the palms must retain a pleasing impression of the mild radiance with which the zodiacal light, shooting pyramidally upwards, illumines a part of the uniform length of tropical nights. I have seen it shine with an intensity of light equal to the Milky Way in Sagittarius; and this not only in the rare and dry atmosphere of the summits of the Andes, at an elevation of from thirteen to fifteen thousand feet

[above the sea], but even in the boundless grassy plains, the llanos of Venezuela, and on the sea-shore beneath the ever-clear sky of Cumana. The phenomenon was often rendered especially beautiful by the passage of light fleecy clouds, which stood out in picturesque and bold relief from the luminous background.'

Describing the zodiacal light as seen by him on his voyage from Lima to the western coasts of Mexico, he says :

' For three or four nights (between  $10^{\circ}$  and  $14^{\circ}$  north latitude), the zodiacal light has appeared in greater splendour than I have ever observed it. From the 14th to the 19th of March, a regular interval of three-quarters of an hour occurred between the disappearance of the sun's disk in the ocean and the first manifestation of the zodiacal light, although the night was already perfectly dark. An hour after sunset, it was seen in great brilliancy between Aldebaran and the Pleiades ; and on the 18th of March it attained an altitude above the horizon of  $39^{\circ} 5'$ . Narrow elongated clouds are scattered over the beautiful deep azure of the distant horizon, flitting across the zodiacal light as before a golden curtain. Above these, other clouds are from time to time reflecting the most brightly-variegated colours. It seems a second sunset. On this [the eastern] side of the vault of heaven, the lightness of the night appears to increase almost as much as at the first quarter of the moon. Towards ten o'clock, the zodiacal light generally becomes very faint in this part of the Southern Ocean ; and at midnight I have scarcely been able to trace a vestige of it. In our gloomy so-called "temperate" northern zone the zodiacal light is only distinctly visible in the beginning of spring, after the evening twilight, in the western part of the sky ; and at the close of autumn, before the dawn of day, above the eastern horizon.'

The zodiacal light is attributed by Humboldt either to 'a vast nebulous ring, rotating between the Earth and Mars, or, less probably, the exterior stratum of the solar atmosphere ;' which luminous matter, he conceives, becomes visible after the stronger light of the dying sun has disappeared. These opinions are still those adopted by men of science ; but, as will be seen, they are mere conjectures—the phenomenon being attributed in one case to the sun's photosphere becoming visible ; and in the other, to a radiance emitted by a supposed nebulous ring existing between our planet and Mars. One or other of these conjectures *must* be wrong ; and it is not less possible that both are wrong. The only point which they have in common is, that they attribute the zodiacal light to a source lying beyond earth, and a great distance from it. But, so far as the facts of the case have yet been ascertained, we incline to regard the phenomenon as one of terrestrial origin,—as having its source in the earth itself, and its manifestation or radiance in and within our own atmosphere. It is a curious fact, under any of these

hypotheses, that this luminous phenomenon should only appear in spring and autumn—speaking roundly, at the equinoxes; but the fact is especially inexplicable on the current hypothesis, that the phenomenon is extra-terrestrial; for if the zodiacal light really comes from the sun, or from a nebulous ring between Earth and Mars, there seems to be no conceivable reason why it should not be visible at all times of the year alike.

Moreover, there is another peculiarity connected with the zodiacal light, which, in our opinion, goes far to invalidate its extra-terrestrial origin, namely, its sudden and fickle variableness. On this point Humboldt says:

‘I have occasionally been astonished, in the tropical regions of South America, to observe the *variable intensity* of the zodiacal light. As I passed the nights, during many months, in the open air—on the shores of rivers, and on llanos—I enjoyed ample opportunities of carefully examining this phenomenon. When the zodiacal light had been most intense, I have observed that it would be perceptibly weakened for a few minutes, until it again suddenly shone forth in full brilliance. In some few instances I have thought that I could perceive—not exactly a reddish colouring, nor the lower portion darkened in the form of an arch, nor even a scintillation, which appearances Mairan affirms he has observed—but a kind of *flickering and wavering* of the light.’

Now, this sudden variableness of the zodiacal light renders it not perhaps impossible, but exceedingly improbable, that it proceeds from a steadily luminous body like the sun, or a nebulous ring in space. But it is entirely explainable on my hypothesis, that the zodiacal light is an emanation from the earth itself. The sudden variableness in intensity is a characteristic feature of the auroræ, or polar light of our planet; and so also is the ‘flickering and wavering’ appearance noticed by Humboldt. The reddish colouring of the light, and also the dark arch at the base of the light, noticed by Mairan, are likewise characteristic features of the auroræ. For these reasons, among others, we regard the zodiacal light as a luminous emanation from the equatorial belt of the earth, similar to, but weaker than, the magnetic light, which our planet unquestionably gives off from its Poles. And if this view be correct, it will go far to explain the fact, that the zodiacal light is only visible at the equinoxes; for at those periods the sun is directly above the equator, which must then be excited to its highest degree of cosmical action.

R. H. PATTERSON.

[Since this article was in type, Professor Respighi, of the University of Campidoglio, has all but substantiated our contributor's views by finding that the spectrum yielded by the Zodiacal Light is identical with that of the Aurora Borealis.—EDITOR.]

## A LIFE'S LOVE

BY THE REV. M. G. WATKINS, M.A., AUTHOR OF 'AN M.D.'S TALE,' 'A ROMANTIC INCIDENT,' ETC.

IN TWO PARTS:—PART II.

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### CHAPTER IV. ON THE TRACK.

FOR the next three weeks all was bustle at Langton. Boxes from London and Paris full of *modes*; dressmakers, jewellers, decorators, the whole race of tradesmen that ministers to our pleasures and luxuries, trod fast on each other's heels. Mr. Marshall had barely leisure afforded him in the intervals of his answering lawyers' letters or consulting with business men to fire off a bad joke or two, and therefore the reader is spared the infliction of perusing them. John was still away, and the girls were immersed in a sea of arrangements for the wedding. Still Janet found time to send a note on delicately-scented pink paper, surmounted by a monogram which no one save the blind clerk at the General Post-office could have disentangled, to Dundas. It began very distantly, as befitted a lady writing to a discarded lover, 'Dear Mr. Dundas;' but the warmth of the sender's nature and her perfect satisfaction at the engagement—perhaps a yet lingering tenderness for the person she addressed—betrayed themselves before it concluded: 'Now I have told you *the* day, be sure that you come in your best spirits, prepared to make yourself agreeable to the bridesmaids (I have asked Miss Fellowes specially with an eye to your comfort), and to do your *devoir* as a loyal knight who has been ever true (alas, too true!) to his ladye. Along with this I send you a favour to wear in my honour—that is to say, if you are not ashamed of ribbons so shockingly creased by my unskilful hands—and am, dear Mr.—*dear Harry*, with deepest wishes for your happiness, yours most gratefully, JANET.'

Of course Dundas kissed the favour on receipt of this; and if Janet had intended to heap fuel on his love, she had certainly succeeded. But I incline to think that it was neither from selfishness nor from forgetfulness of his feelings that she wrote thus warmly, but simply from the exuberance of early friendship. The boundary indeed which separates that sentiment from love was very loosely defined in her bosom. Simply because she was joyous, guileless, and grateful for all he had been to her, did she thus write to Dundas. Many a cigar did he, for his part, consume while inwardly chafing at Fate, and cursing the swift hours that brought the 6th of August



closer. No condemned criminal ever counted his few remaining days with deeper despair than did Dundas reckon the short interval that intervened before the marriage. He would not during those days go to the house, and risk seeing the lovers together; he could not in honour attempt any farther to win Janet, nor could he find a flaw in the irreproachable behaviour of the Captain. His past history was a blank, it was true; but what right had *he* to take it up, if the young lady's parents were satisfied with her lover's antecedents? John too had wondered at his inquisitiveness, as if all were right with the Captain. He was unquestionably a fascinating accomplished fellow, a man who got on well with his new connections. It seemed as if destiny must run its course in the matter, and his chances of marrying Janet lose irretrievably. But as he was bidden bear himself like a knight, it must not be as a knight of the rueful countenance. Immediate action was necessary. His suspicions pointed to something wrong. There were, first of all, an invincible dislike to the Captain, which, as it was instinctive, logically proved but little; then came his conviction that, on the first night on which he met him, the Captain had descended to cheating at cards; and lastly, the curious coincidence of his urgent departure on what he thought, so far as he knew the circumstances, insufficient reasons on two consecutive months at the same day. This might point to madness or to some unexplained mystery, which ought to be cleared up. Being a practical man, he forthwith mounted, rode hastily to Langton, and sought an interview with its owner.

Mr. Marshall, on hearing Dundas's surmises, founded (as nothing more could be mentioned to him) on no better reason than the departure of the gallant Captain on the same day in two consecutive months, was inclined to think Dundas had taken leave of his own senses. 'Why, Dundas,' he said, 'you must be laughing at me. If I thought you serious in your suspicions, I should send at once for a straw-wig for you. What in the world would you have me do—delay the wedding, eh?'

'If I say yes, Mr. Marshall, it is only because I—because in old days I myself felt no small love for Janet. I venture, so strong are my suspicions, for *her* sake to ask you to put off the marriage for a few days.'

'Can't be done, my dear fellow; the women have made all the preparations. Come and dance at the wedding, and forget all your fears; we can't do without you. There's my horse come round. Good-bye. Did you see them moving that dilapidated water-barrel from the stable-yard as you came in? It looks as if it had been made a butt of for many a year, doesn't it? Ha, ha, ha!' and he disappeared to take his ride.

The settlements meanwhile were progressing satisfactorily enough to Captain Gibbs. The girls were to have moieties of their mother's

fortune, and Janet's share was 15,000*l.* He himself had told Mr. Marshall when he asked for Janet's hand that he could only throw his sword into the settlement, as Camillus had done on a memorable occasion at Rome, and the statement had been acquiesced in. 'She will have enough for both,' said Mr. Marshall. 'I hope you will not take my darling off to foreign service. My wife and I are getting on in life, and like to have our daughters near us.' Lawyers are dilatory, however, and their negotiations and wordiness fretted the Captain inwardly, though he took care not to show it. 'Not many more days now,' he thought. 'Well' (and then a fragment of the classics came into his memory), '*jacta est alea*;' and he shrugged his shoulders.

This equanimity was destined to be disturbed before the end of July. The circumstances which caused this will best be gathered from a letter which Dundas, a few days after his last visit to Langton, received.

'Dear Dundas,—The high-sheriff has an important meeting of J.P.s on the 6th. I must attend; so the wedding (much to the Captain's chagrin) is put off till the 8th—Wednesday. Fate is propitious to your theories, you see. We shall have rooms ready for you from Monday the 6th. Come over early that day to amuse the bridesmaids.—Very sincerely yours,

H. J. P. MARSHALL.

'Langton, July 25, 186—.'

Dundas was overjoyed at the receipt of this. 'The one thing I longed for,' he said. 'If my views are wrong, then poor Janet shall become Mrs. Gibbs, and—and—yes—she—*she* too shall have my best wishes.'

As for the Captain, he was—but he shall speak for himself. He has sauntered into Langton Chase, wandered into a distant glade amongst the bracken, and flung himself down under the shade of a huge oak. Lighting a little meerschaum, that from its colour seemed a frequent comforter, and resting his head on his hands, he watched the fleecy clouds that every now and then shone through the heavy foliage above him, as it parted under the breath of the soft summer wind. Then he puffed out huge columns of smoke, and thought as follows: 'What a fair plot it was too!—all so smooth—my best venture hitherto. How Dick Dungeon will laugh, envious though he be at present! What is to be done? I love her too—yes, I love Janet dearly; she is a good girl. A man—any other man than I—might well be proud of her. I wish that her ruin were not involved in the matter; but I must have the money. Bah! one would think I was a learner in the gay science to stick at marriage, at anything, when 15,000*l.* is at stake. No craning now! What does the fellow in the play say? "I'll screw my courage to the sticking-point." Let me see. I must make another excuse for the 6th. I hope that dark fellow Dundas does not suspect anything. His look is too like that

of policeman X. I half think sometimes that he sees through me.' And then he ruminated a short time, lost in silent enjoyment of the tobacco. At length he rose, having made up his mind to the course of action he would pursue, and, not without some perturbation, made his way back to dinner.

In the conservatory he caught sight of a graceful figure in blue muslin, and joined Janet, who pouted a little. 'Well, sir, we had given you up for lost. What have you been about—preparing a speech for *the* day?'

'Dreaming about the shadow of perfection.'

'But I would so much rather have had you with me. I have not known what to do with myself all the afternoon; and of all flowers, I like love in idleness best.'

'Well, love,' he replied, taking her arm, 'let us walk up and down a little, and talk over this important day that so slowly approaches.'

'If time seems to pass slowly now,' said Janet, with a look of devotion at her hero, 'it will be my care that it does not do so hereafter.'

'Darling, do I look as if I distrusted you?' and he repaid her look with an earnest gaze, while she prattled on like a child, absorbed in her own happiness. The bird was perilously close to the limed twig, and the fowler's heart was relentless. Well did the old poets represent Prosperity as blinding her victim before she ruined it. How little did Janet reckon of the cruel change at hand!

The all-important 8th was on a Wednesday, and as the lovers returned from the little church in the Chase on the Sunday, Gibbs imparted to Janet that he had not yet been able to choose his present, but was intending to start for this purpose to London on the morrow, and come down again on the Tuesday. He wished to choose her a brooch, he said, that possessed the two excellences of beauty in its materials, and artistic merit in its design. A massive brooch was out of place in Janet's jewel-casket, and the modern patterns were so conventional—all of them horseshoes or stars—that he had determined to ransack Bond-street in person, and secure his bride a really creditable piece of workmanship. Janet could very well spare him for the next two days—indeed, men were always a nuisance at such a time. Janet tardily acquiesced in this arrangement, and the Captain informed the family party at lunch (including Mr. Stone, who happened to have come in) of his departure next morning, and its object.

Immediately after his return to the Rectory, Stone wrote a note to Dundas, informing him that it now seemed as if his theory had some reason in it; for the Captain was again going to London on the next day, the 6th. Dundas received this note about half-past *three*, and forthwith, seizing his stick, set off to walk to Langton,

and arrange his plans by the way. He could not, he felt, very well call at the house to make the needful inquiries ; he must manage, however, at all events to find the butler, else he could not learn what he most wanted to know. By good luck he met that functionary taking an afternoon walk in the plantations, looking very plethoric about the neck, as if he had wrapped at least two tablecloths round his enormous collars.

‘By the way, Barker,’ after some ordinary remarks on the weather, Dundas began, ‘the poachers have been at Brentwood again ; I want a clever detective. Do you remember the name of that policeman, who came down to see about the robbery in your master’s study?’

‘Let me see, sir. No, I can’t quite recall it ; but here I have his address, which the gentleman was obliging enough to leave with me before he returned home, sir. Here it is ;’ and after some fumbling in a pocket-book which was big enough to have held the title-deeds of the Langton property, he handed to Dundas a professional-looking card bearing the inscription :

*Private and Confidential.*

MR. HARRISON,

15 — STREET, STRAND, LONDON,

*Undertakes all inquiries on private and delicate subjects.*

Cases got up for the Divorce Court.

Mysterious Disappearances, Elopements, &c. carefully and speedily detected and arranged on reasonable terms.

Dundas smiled at the handcuffs and policemen’s staves which formed the corners of this production, and said :

‘This is exactly what I wanted to know, Barker. Good afternoon.’

And then passing apparently onwards towards Langton, as soon as he was out of the man’s sight he turned sharp to the left, and made his way, after an hour’s brisk walking, to the same little station of Boynthorpe, where, as we have seen, Captain Gibbs once before had ridden. Dundas delivered a message to the sleepy youth to be telegraphed to town, and returned home to make his preparations for the morrow.

Next morning he was up by the peep of day, and drove to a station five miles on the other side of Langton. When the first train for town arrived, he ensconced himself in the guard’s van, and along with that functionary lighted his cigar. At Langton, as he expected, from his unobserved nook he saw the Captain shown into a first class. Then Dundas entered another at the end of the train ;

and soon after midday the train drew up at Waterloo-bridge ticket-platform.

On Dundas looking out of the window and displaying his ticket in his hatband, he was joined by a respectable man with a blue bag under his arm, who looked like a lawyer's clerk. Bringing his forefinger to his forehead, he said :

‘ Mr. Dundas, I believe, sir.’

‘ Quite right. Get in here, Mr. Harrison.’

In a few words Dundas explained to the detective that he wished a sharp look-out to be kept on the movements of a gentleman called Captain Gibbs. He surmised that he was mad, and desired confirmation of his supposition by watching his proceedings during the afternoon. Harrison asked a question or two, and on their arriving at the station, told Dundas to keep in the background, and act as he should direct.

‘ This is an everyday proceeding, sir,’ he observed carelessly ; ‘ no need of headwork, as when pursuing a runaway criminal.’

On having the Captain pointed out, he sauntered gently up to him, apparently preoccupied in looking all round for his master. He noticed the Captain's nervous glance and indecision whether he should walk or call a cab. At length he chose the latter, and the detective heard him give the direction, ‘ St. Martin's-lane.’ Harrison started at the tones, and took a good look at his quarry as he drove off, expressing his astonishment at some inward recognition by a long low whistle, and exclamation of ‘ Well, I *am* blowed !’ Then he beckoned to Dundas, put him quickly into another cab, ordered the driver to keep the previous one in sight, and without a word more jumped up beside him.

When the Captain was set down at St. Martin's-lane, his pursuers also left their cab, and traced him at a safe distance till he disappeared in a dingy house in the Seven Dials, next door to which a quantity of lop-eared rabbits and a ‘ genuine tortoiseshell tom’ were hung up in cages. Harrison and Dundas took up their position in a small shop alive with canaries exactly opposite, so as to command the door where the Captain had entered. For some time no one emerged. About four o'clock the door opened, a workman appeared, and walked slowly down the street. Harrison left the shop, and after a dozen strides ran back for Dundas.

‘ Here's the Cap'en,’ he said.

‘ Impossible !’ replied Dundas. ‘ That fellow the Captain ? It is simply nonsense. Let us return to our post.’

‘ Excuse me, sir ; never trust me again if that ain't the Cap'en. Our trade makes us cautious, sir ; we have very queer customers to deal with, and they often disguise themselves, like our friend in front.’

Though still incredulous, Dundas was silent, and occupied him-



sel in guessing what would be the end of this adventure. Steadily the Captain walked on, and as steadily did his pursuers advance some twenty yards behind, Dundas meanwhile covering himself behind the detective.

‘Can he be going, from a sense of duty, to Bethlehem in that strange guise?’ thought he. ‘But, then, let me see; Bethlehem is over the water; besides, I am not quite sure whether they keep lunatics there now. At all events, the Captain is as mad as a hatter to be going about like a guy on the 5th of November. Well, he cannot marry Janet, I should think, after this escapade.’ And then a thrill of delight shot through him. Joy of joys! Janet might yet be his!

Harrison woke him from this dream of love, by beckoning him onwards. They had turned out of Long Acre into Bow-street, and were going towards Waterloo-bridge. All at once Captain Gibbs stopped short, and entered the police-station after saying a few words to the two policemen who kept the door.

‘Aha!’ observed Harrison to Dundas, ‘this was just what I expected. Stay here, sir, till I return.’ With these words he tipped a wink to the stern blue-coated officials, whose gravity relaxed to a grin on his entering, as Cerberus might have unbent when Æneas flung him the medicated cake, and passed on to enter the infernal regions. Swiftly threading the narrow passage, Harrison flung open the door at its end. This admitted him to a room not unlike a counting-house, except that it might have been supposed that a great robbery had just been committed there, to judge from the number of policemen who tenanted it. A business-like inspector, by a desk in a corner, was writing in a book like a ledger, and addressing Gibbs, who stood in front.

‘Just in time; we should have closed the books before long. Number?’

‘7269,’ laconically replied Captain Gibbs.

‘Name and address?’ continued the interrogator.

‘Henry Dawson, 9 Saville-street, Seven Dials.’

‘Right,’ observed the official, tracing his finger down the page, till he reached number 7269. ‘Let me see, this is the seventh time you have appeared. The 6th is your day, eh?’

‘Yes.’

‘Driving an honest livelihood now, eh? I don’t hear of your being seen much about town?’

‘I have been taking some piece-work at Wakefield, and came up at great inconvenience. All on the square now, you know.’

‘Very well,’ and he made an entry; ‘that will do. Don’t be so late next time. Be off with you;’ and he turned to address another slouching individual with red eyes and retreating forehead, who had just entered.

As the Captain gladly prepared to execute this command, he was confronted by Harrison, who threw open his top-coat and displayed the blue uniform and braided bars of an inspector. 'Not so fast, my fine fellow,' he said; 'you and I have a little account to settle. Where do you hail from, do you say?'

'Wakefield.'

'I *rayther* thought it had been Langton. Aha! you needn't turn so fishy about the gills. Nice place, isn't it? Nice girls there too; plenty of tin for cracksmen and magsmen. Uncommon nice quarters, I've heard it is. So you've come up for a brooch? Sorry to have to oblige you with a bracelet instead;' and in a twinkling he had handcuffed the unfortunate Captain and pushed him on to a form.

'Atkin,' he observed, motioning to a subordinate, 'ask the gentleman outside to step in.'

Dundas was petrified on entering to observe the quondam Captain transformed from the pink of fashion to a fustian-clad ruffian. Silent and dejected, the unfortunate man sat glaring at Dundas as the author of his troubles, when that worthy was in truth ignorant himself of the mystery which had led the Captain into such an evil plight. The inspector and subordinates went on with their occupations at the ledgers, seemingly indifferent to the whole occurrence, so Dundas turned an inquiring look on Harrison, who simply observed, 'Ticket-o'-leave, sir,' nodding in the direction of the Captain.

'Good heavens!' said Dundas, 'do you mean to say he is a convict?'

'If there is any justice in England,' exclaimed the criminal, 'you shall find out, Mr. Dundas, what it costs to handcuff an innocent man.'

'What do you mean?' said Dundas angrily. 'I did not bring you here. Your own fine sense of justice seems to have led you to your proper dwelling.'

'Where is your warrant for seizing me, I should like to know?' rejoined the Captain, with equal warmth. 'I'll have a thousand pounds damages for this! By the lord Harry, I will! What new trick are you after, Mr. Harrison? You are a great deal too clever at your profession, and you shall smart for to-day's job.'

'Ha, ha, ha!' laughed, loud and long, the detective. 'I should have thought that you knew me better, Dawson. I'm not a marrying man myself, but it is pleasant to put a spoke occasionally into a neighbour's wheel, eh? do you understand?' and he playfully poked his captive in the ribs with a policeman's staff that lay handily on the counter where he was leaning. 'But I think we have had enough of this;' and his manner suddenly changed. 'I have a little business with you. Come, shell out; let me see what you have got;' and he proceeded to search the Captain, who made no opposition whatever.





J. A. Pasquier, del.

Edmond Evans, sc.

"CAPTAIN GIBBS" RUN TO EARTH.

A cigar-case, fuzee-box, memorandum-book, keys, and such-like articles were soon deposited on the counter. Contrary to Dundas's opinion, who still remained as a bystander, the detective took no notice whatever of these, but proceeded to extract the money from his pockets. He took up the four sovereigns which he found there, and bringing them forwards to the light examined them closely. Presently he turned round with a smile of triumph on his face. 'Pray, Mr. Dawson, will you oblige me by telling me where you got these yellow-boys?' and he held up three of the four sovereigns.

'I suppose they were paid me for wages, or else I took them in change,' said the quondam Captain.

'I rayther think I know better, Dawson. Come, come; the game is up at last. You had better make a clean breast of it at once. I take you into custody,' he added firmly, 'for robbing the private drawer of Mr. Marshall of Langton.' The Captain started violently and changed colour. 'Aha! you shall be lagged again as sure as I stand here;' and Harrison rubbed his hands with all the delight of Javert in *Les Misérables*. 'I only wanted one link to convict you, and these supply it;' and he pointed to the four sovereigns.

'You will find yourself very much mistaken, friend Harrison,' said the Captain sullenly. 'But I am tired of all this; if I am to go to Newgate, you had better take me off at once. Remember, I am an innocent man, and you shall dearly rue this day's work, both of you;' and he shook his fist at Harrison and Dundas.

'Good-night to you,' said the latter; 'and if all this is true, and you robbed your entertainer's house, you are the biggest villain I ever hope to meet.'

There was a loud knock outside at this instant; a policeman stepped forward and opened the door.

'Has my Harry been here yet?' exclaimed a shrill female voice. 'I haven't seen him since last month: he left us wi' never a bite or sup, and never a taste of gin have I had since—'

'Woman,' said the inspector sternly, turning half round from his desk, 'how dare you make a disturbance here? Whom do you want to see?'

'Harry Dawson, my husband, to be sure,' said the virago.

'Dawson, the ticket-of-leave man?' struck in Harrison. 'Here he is then;' and he pointed to the luckless Captain, who sat in utter desperation.

'There you are, you son of a loon!' exclaimed the woman. 'Why don't you come home to me and the childer? Sorrow take the day on which I married you!' and now she burst into tears, seeing her husband once more handcuffed, and, with all that swift revulsion of feeling which marks her sex, flung her arms round him, brute though he had been to her, and wept aloud.

Dundas stood a silent wonder-struck spectator of the scene.



'Come, come, my good woman,' at length the inspector said, advancing from his desk, 'be comforted; we have him safe for the present. It will be better for you to leave here now,' he added in a kindly tone.

Two policemen approached to take away Gibbs *alias* Dawson. Nothing loth, he jumped up, and saying, 'Look here, Nancy, you apply at the beak's to-morrow for my money,' gently disengaged himself from her embrace, said, 'Good-bye, old girl,' and with a kiss disappeared down a dark passage that led to the cells, turning round to fling a scowl at Harrison and Dundas.

As for the latter, he followed the weeping woman outside and pressed five shillings into her hand. 'Do you mean to say that you are that man's wife?' he asked.

'That I am,' she replied. 'I have been married to him ten years come Michaelmas, sir.'

'Do you mind giving me your address? I want it very particularly.'

The woman named a street in Clerkenwell, which Dundas put down in his tablets.

'How do you manage to live, now your husband has taken to bad ways?' he asked.

'Well, sir, sometimes it is more starving than living. The children pick up orange-peel in winter, which I make into marmalade and sell to the small grocers; during the rest of the year they beg the used tea-leaves from hotels and houses, and then we roll and dry them, and sell them cheaply. When the worst comes, the parish gives us a loaf.'

'I am heartily sorry for your troubles, and as I happen to know something of the rector of your parish, will make inquiries, and see what can be done for you. Good-night.'

The woman curtsied and departed. Tall, slatternly, and dissipated as she was, she was capable of being touched by kindness, and possessed a heart, Dundas reflected, whose love was not stifled by all the neglect and ill-treatment of ten years. Dundas possessed some knowledge of the working classes, and could not but recall how many instances he had seen in women where tenderness, even when utterly misplaced, yet lingered like a spark in the ashes of those visions of married bliss which their husbands had so effectually consumed. Verily, many waters cannot drown love; time itself only dims its lustre; trouble will often bring back its pristine glow.

But we must hasten onwards. Dundas immediately telegraphed to Mr. Marshall to stop the wedding preparations, and to break it to his daughter that Captain Gibbs was wholly unworthy of another thought; that he was in fact a married man. Fuller details he wrote down to Stone, bidding him acquaint the Marshalls with them

at once. Then he started *viâ* Edinburgh and the Trossachs, travelling leisurely to his moor.

Nothing need be said of the consternation which these tidings caused at Langton. Let us rather follow the fortunes of the Captain. He was duly indicted at the Central Criminal Court for robbery. The case was left to the sagacity of Harrison, and although it turned wholly on circumstantial evidence, that worthy chuckled as he obtained a conviction. First of all he instructed counsel as to the previous adventures of Captain Gibbs *alias* Dawson, that he was a ticket-of-leave man under sentence for a daring burglary. Then he proved conclusively, by detailing the different points he noticed on his visit to Mr. Marshall's study, and which have been already recounted, that this robbery was committed by some one from within; that the character of the tools used showed that no one but an expert would either possess them or use them to such purpose; and that grease had been employed during the perpetration of the act which he could swear came from what was on the Captain's dressing-table. Finally, he proved that the four sovereigns found on the prisoner (for which he could not satisfactorily account) were part of a very peculiar issue of sovereigns in the year 1824, each of which was intrinsically worth more than the regulation sovereign, which led to the whole batch being recalled; that this issue consisted only of 200, and that the coins remaining in Mr. Marshall's drawer belonged to these, being an old hoard of his father's, which, for some reason or other, the son had not spent; and that it was so extremely improbable as to amount to a moral impossibility that the Captain should, by the ordinary transactions of every-day life, become possessed of specimens so remarkable. The eloquent counsel contended therefore that the money found on the prisoner formed part of his booty, and that all the circumstances taken together almost irresistibly pointed to him alone as the robber. Harrison's cleverness, as we have said, was rewarded by a conviction, and Gibbs *alias* Dawson was sentenced to forfeit his privileges, and to undergo penal servitude for ten years. The other count in the indictment, his conspiracy to marry under false pretences, was therefore not pursued, Mr. Marshall preferring to waive additional punishment rather than divulge family secrets.

## CHAPTER V.

### GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES.

WE must now return to Langton, though it were vain to recount the rage of Mr. Marshall, the remorse of John that he had introduced so unworthy an inmate of the house as Dawson, or the grief of Hester at the great sorrow which had come upon her sister's life. As for Janet, it was long before they could make her under-

stand what had happened, or lead her to realise her situation. Her pets, her flowers, her usual occupations lost all their attractions; she went about as one in a dream, sometimes falling into extreme low spirits, at other times being absent and *distracted* to a degree that much embarrassed the family. A maiden aunt came to Langton in those days; but her presence, welcome as it usually was to Janet, could not dispel the gloom that weighed her down. By her advice, and in harmony with Mr. Marshall's wishes, it was settled that Langton should be closed, and the family go abroad for two years, in hopes of shaking off the malady which beset poor Janet, and in order that fresh scenes and brighter air should strengthen and give the system that tone which was so deplorably lacking to it. No more for the present, then, are merry voices heard among the shrubberies, or the thousand small signs that mark careful human tending visible in the gardens of Langton.

‘ The hedgehog underneath the plaintain bores,  
The rabbit fondles his own harmless face,  
The slow-worm creeps, and the thin weasel there  
Follows the mouse.’

The old woman at the lodge tells strangers, ‘ The family be abroad; us ’ll be main glad when they come back; ’t isn’t like the same place;’ and her husband shakes his head as he lights his pipe, his heart full to overflowing with memories of the past.

Stone had been much with the Marshalls when the *éclaircissement* connected with Captain Gibbs’ deceit took place. The parson finds himself more in request than even the confidential lawyer of a family under such circumstances. His advice, if not always so redolent of worldly knowledge as the latter’s, has the merit of being unprofessional, and its sincerity is sure to be tempered with personal regard and friendship. Mr. Marshall was inclined to trust Stone implicitly; John thought him ‘ a right good fellow;’ Janet called him ‘ her father confessor;’ and Hester—well, Hester’s feelings were gradually assuming a warmer tinge towards him, and in the silence of her own room she every evening rebuked herself for her cold and heartless rejection of his addresses, as it now seemed to her when engaged in brushing her lustrous back-hair. Meanwhile, Stone was assiduous in his attention upon her comfort whenever he came up to the house, but no farther word or look of love escaped him. He was closeted sometimes for an hour or two with her father. Then he would come into the drawing-room with bright and cheering looks for all, advising, planning, guiding, taking any trouble of correspondence in reference to their projected trip off their hands, but in no way betraying his preference for Hester. Gradually she lost that awe which had marked her manners towards him since her refusal of him. Perhaps she even advanced to pique that he did not seem more alive to her attractions, more inclined to re-

new those terms of half-affectionate intercourse which had formerly marked their friendship. And so it came to pass that she could meet and converse with him ere long, not merely without embarrassment, but with less constraint than in the days before his proposal of marriage: a bar had been broken between them, as it were, and they knew each other better ever afterwards.

On the afternoon before the Marshalls departed from Langton, Stone sauntered into the drawing-room, where Hester sat alone, resting after the fatigue of packing and giving orders.

'Good-afternoon, Miss Marshall,' he began. 'I see that you are fatigued; nothing is so tiring as making arrangements.'

'I have dear Janet's plans to look after as well as my own and every one else's,' she added, smiling. 'It is perhaps no wonder if I own to being rather harassed.'

'I came up to wish you all good-bye.'

'And papa strictly charged me to ask you to spend the evening with us. We dine at seven.'

'Thank you. Do you know I feel, now you are all going, as if I were sentenced to be hanged to-morrow morning.'

'Yes; I can well understand the feeling. Langton will be so dull for you when we are on the Continent,' and then she bethought herself that she had said too much, and added, with a slight change of colour, 'at least for a few days.'

'You are quite right,' he observed, without apparently noticing her remark. 'I shall miss you all on Sundays at church. I shall not care, wrong though you will say it is, to visit the school if I don't find you or your sister there. As for the woods and gardens here, I shall never be able to come near them. Indeed, I cannot tell when I shall miss you most.' He mused a little, and then resumed his subject. 'My own house will be twice as desolate as it is.'

'Papa will be so glad to hear from you occasionally,' she ventured to say in a lower voice. Fearless though she was, she could not help perceiving that she and her lover were on the edge of a volcano.

'I shall let him know all that goes on,' he said, and then relapsed into silence.

After an interval, Hester said smilingly, 'We are both moping very strangely this afternoon. Shall I play a little?'

'No, don't move. Do you remember our conversation in the shrubbery? One life at least was marred that day. I do not believe in broken hearts; but I needs must own that a moment, a look, a word can crush the hopes of a lifetime, and take out all the zest and purpose of an existence.'

She sadly replied, 'Mr. Stone has higher motives and truer hopes than those which a—a foolish woman can touch.'

'As in so many other instances, lower feelings often usurp herein the throne of the heart. We cannot always master ourselves. Human nature occasionally craves of the will, be it ever so imperious, sympathy and interchange of thought. I,' he continued with sarcastic accents,—'I can furnish "the flow of soul" when I order my housekeeper to cook me mutton for dinner; I can enjoy "the feast of reason" with Padre, my dog.'

'Forgive me, instead of accusing you of being soured, if I suggest that in sharing the wants and woes of others you can find the truest solace for your own troubles.'

'I had half resolved, Hester, to ask you if you could reconsider your late refusal; but it would be ungenerous to obtrude my own cares on you to-day.'

'Might they not possibly be mine as well?' she could not help saying; for she abhorred all diffidence, and on the most important theme which can engross a woman's heart preferred to risk the imputation of being unmaidenly rather than that of affectation or the least want of straightforwardness.

'Are you speaking in the interests of humanity in general,' he asked with a smile, 'arguing on the principle of philanthropy you were inculcating just now? or—or—or from a tenderer feeling?'

O, Mr. Stone! why waste words when the battle is won? Never argue on feelings with a woman; Cupid's motto in warfare should be *Veni, vidi, vici*. The boldest suitor is the first to carry his point, and many a fortress which might have been originally taken by storm holds out through an interminable blockade. Not without reason does the Master of Love tell us,

'Pugnabit primo fortassis, et, Improbe, dicet :  
Pugnando vinci sed tamen illa volet.'

What answer poor Hester, now wreathed in blushes, would have made to Mr. Stone's last remark cannot be told. She was in the act of saying, 'I must leave it to you to adapt it to the right alternative,' when the door opened and her father appeared.

'How do, Stone? right glad to see you. What a business it is to leave home! You dine with us to-night? That's all right.'

Next John entered. 'We'll have a rubber to-night, Stone, the last we shall play for many a long night.'

'Very well,' replied the Rector, having now recovered his composure. 'Trouble and partings for to-morrow; to-night'll be the happiest time of all the glad New-year!'

'For shame, Mr. Stone!' said Hester; 'how dare you apply the sweetest thing Tennyson ever wrote to so commonplace a subject as whist-playing?'

'It is my way of showing my delight in an author when he is always on the tip of my tongue. Besides, your true poet sees no



incongruity in commonplace subjects, but invests them with fresh interest by his art. Does not the Laureate make

“ The violet of a legend blow  
Among the chops and steaks” ?

‘ Worse and worse, Mr. Stone ! You are as prosaic as Tupper himself.’

‘ Making game of the Laureate ?’ said Mr. Marshall with a chuckle ; ‘ like the boy who would insist on calling patriarch partridge.’

And then Miss Marshall, the aunt, entered ; one of those little bright people who seem specially sent into the world to make others happy. They chatted until it was time to dress for dinner, and Stone found no opportunity of asking the question which was nearest his heart. How often do untoward circumstances, a chance person entering, a letter, an unexpected rencontre, change the current of existence ! But for Mr. Marshall’s unlucky entrance, the Rector reflected, he might now be the happiest of men, or at all events, he would know his fate decisively ; perhaps he might obtain no other chance of seeing Hester by herself, and she would start to-morrow, it might be for two years, to the Continent. That was too agonising to be thought of. He must write a proposal, if the worst came to the worst. Yet how unsatisfactory that proceeding would be ! Cold words without the eloquence of pleading eyes and earnest looks, without the possibility, it might be, of obtaining a ray of hope for the future if definitely rejected at present. No (and here he flung another white necktie to the chaos of ruined ones under his dressing-table, such thoughts not being favourable to tying a neat bow), he must at all hazards find a time to-night to ask Hester the vital question ; it was impossible to linger in suspense for two years. And then he succeeded with his bow, and descended to the drawing-room. He was not the first who had entered, but as he looked round the room he could not see Hester. Janet sat by the open window, inhaling the freshness of evening, and he took his place next her.

‘ You are sure to find great changes when you return to Langton,’ he said ; ‘ by the law of averages with our population, a dozen at least of the parishioners will have died.’

‘ Yes,’ she replied ; ‘ but the same law will have introduced a certain number of fresh faces by marriage amongst us, though new faces are never to me like old ones.’

‘ Quite so ; but they bring fresh interests with them to replace old memories. Nature does not suffer heart-griefs to be green for any length of time,’ he added kindly.

‘ Ah, Mr. Stone, some lie too deep for any sunshine ever to fall upon them. You must not think that it is so with yours, though ; faint heart ne’er won—you know the rest ?’

As Stone looked his thanks he noticed a tear <sup>4</sup>trembling on the long dark lashes, and the violet eyes, which formed so beautiful a feature in Janet's face, suffused with tenderness.

'Pardon me if I have said too much, Mr. Stone,' she continued, 'but you have been so like a brother to us for years that I could not wish you good-bye without showing my gratitude;' and she smiled the old bewitching smile once more.

'I accept the omen gladly,' was all he could reply, for—

'Stone!' exclaimed the stentorian voice of Mr. Marshall, 'will you give your arm to Hester? Janet, my darling, come and help your father in—only a *step farther*, however—to the dining-room. Ha, ha, ha!'

Greatly to Stone's astonishment, Hester had entered unobserved as he talked to her sister. Now or never, he reflected, as she took his arm. Only a few yards intervened between the two rooms, but he had time to say while the others chatted round him, 'Hester, to resume our conversation of this afternoon—you leave to-morrow; I must put my fate in your hands once more—will you make me happy for life?'

'Yes—if you wish it, I will try my best,' softly replies Hester, with her cheeks matching the rosebud she bent over in her bosom. He pressed her arm closer to him; while she on her part just tightened her grasp on his to satisfy her sense of his now belonging to her, and they were in the dining-room without their eyes having once met.

The departure took place, as arranged, on the morrow; but the following December Stone made a trip to Cannes, and in its little church the lovers were united, literally 'made happy for life,' as you would say, could you look in upon Langton Rectory. The most characteristic productions of two climes decorated the church at their marriage. Amongst the palms and orange-blossoms of the country were conspicuously wreathed the blushing holly and the snowy-flowered laurustinus of old England, brought over by Stone to remind his bride and the many English residents at Cannes of the merry Christmas of their distant homes.

\* \* \* \* \*

On a balmy morning of the second spring that followed upon these events, a carriage-and-four made its way, as quickly as the nature of the ground admitted, up the Corniche road which leads from Mentone to Nice. The postillions cracked their whips merrily, the bells on the horses tinkled in unison, and the occupants of the carriage, elated with the beauty of the scenery around them and the exhilarating qualities of the mountain air, kept up an animated conversation on what they had lately seen. Easter-week at Rome, to say nothing of the treasures of art enshrined in the Vatican, might of themselves account for any amount of enthusiasm. But Florence

and the Boboli gardens, 'the giant windows' blazoned fires' of Milan Cathedral, with the glorious peep of Monte Rosa seen from its summit, San Remo and its picturesque groups of peasants which they had just passed—all these were duly reviewed and commented on, with many an English reminiscence, intermingled with not a few quips and cranks from an elderly gentleman to enliven the travel-talk. And now they had entered upon one of the loveliest parts of the many passes which command fine views amongst the Maritime Alps; no one who has traversed the road will ever forget it. Higher and higher they mounted, with the limestone rock-walls on their right, dazzling in the white glare of the morning sun, relieved at every turn by groups of pines and juniper, or opening upon enchanting glimpses of distant Alpine giants and sweet pastoral valleys spread like a map far below. To the left the ground fell in fearful precipices, often without any intervening barrier, towards the low grounds; and a vast expanse of sea, bluer almost than the blue skies overhead, and dotted here and there with white specks of sail, glimmered into a far-off horizon of golden haze. These are the regions of a vegetation marked by a peculiar Mediterranean type, distinct from western Italy on the one side and central France on the other, but analogous to the flora of Spain. Its character is well described in the Laureate's lines,

'O love, what hours were thine and mine,  
In lands of palm and southern pine;  
In lands of palm, of orange blossom,  
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine!'

Add to these, groves of lemon, and remember that every wall near Mentone is covered with maiden-hair fern, and the reader may imagine what delights the Corniche road displays to every lover of nature, as it was at this time doing for the occupants of the carriage.

They had now reached a plateau sheltered from the sun by an overhanging cliff, and commanding a glorious view of the snowy Alps, scamed with many a glacier that gleamed through the light mists, like the thin silver threads of those mighty torrents Sir S. Baker beheld on the other side of the vast Albert Nyanza Lake. The above-mentioned elderly gentleman here reached out of the carriage and shouted,

'Hollo, you there! stop! halt, I say!' As the postillions simply turned round with the everlasting 'Oui, monsieur; suite, monsieur!' he fancied they had not understood him, and said to a young lady next him, 'Just tell me what to say to these rascals.—Hollo!' again he shouted; 'arrêtez vous! Halt!'

Needless to say this is our old friend Mr. Marshall making his way through the Continent with his family by a diligent use of that fine nervous French so much affected by our countrymen, yclept

'tourist French,' and still more successfully by dint of possessing a long purse.

At length the carriage stopped, Mr. and Mrs. Marshall descended and the young lady before mentioned, in whom her friends will have no difficulty in discerning Janet. She is stronger in health and the tone of her spirits is restored to its old animation, save that a tinge of melancholy imparts at times more staidness to her manners and conversation than in former days. Change of air and scene had brought back the roses to her cheeks, and as she steps down, the flush imparted to her face by the keen mountain air is eminently becoming to her fine features.

'The view does credit to your judgment, papa,' she exclaims. 'I have exhausted all my superlatives long ago, so shall expend none on this splendid expanse of country, but shall praise you instead.'

'Ah!' replies Mr. Marshall, shaking his 'Murray,' a talisman which he was never without, 'I found that there was a good place for lunching on this plateau, so I ordered Barker to take plenty of things with him from Mentone. Here they are!'

The footman and lady's-maid were producing numerous hampers and baskets from the rumble, out of which protruded divers long-necked bottles, the contents of which were likely to prove acceptable in the heat of midday.

'Spread your cloth here,' said Mrs. Marshall, pointing to a verdant bank edged with Alpine roses and sheltered by a huge rock, high up the face of which nestled a bed of blue gentians, so intensely blue that you could almost fancy a patch of the sky overhead had drifted across the rock and been arrested there.

'And, you fellows,' ordered Mr. Marshall, 'unharness your beasts and take them on to—to—' (and then he consulted his oracle)—'to the little *auberge* kept by Jacques Balmain, three hundred yards round the Col in front of you! Come back in a couple of hours' time.—Janet, translate this into their vile *patois*; my French is too pure for these parts.'

These arrangements having been made, Janet announced her intention of going back a short distance round the corner they had just passed and making a sketch of Monaco before lunch. Her father, who had stretched himself at full length on the sward and unfolded a *Galignani*, acquiesced, bidding her return in twenty minutes at farthest, as he was longing for the wing of a chicken. 'You are so spoilt by listening to good things, Janet, that I fear if I give you a *merrythought* you will not even smile, eh? Well, good-bye; don't be long, and mind the brigands!' This was shouted as she disappeared fifty yards lower down round the shoulder of the hill. 'Now, dear,' he continued, addressing his wife, who was attending to the viands, 'make us one of your unrivalled salads,

and mind you don't forget the Tarragon vinegar! Salad minus that is—is—well, is like taking a trip on the Continent without your "Murray"! and so he subsided into his paper.

As for Janet, she fixed her camp-stool by the side of the road, where a sudden dip revealed the white houses and orange-groves of Monaco far below, and was soon absorbed in her occupation. The road was visible for a quarter of a mile from her position as it wound down the mountain-side, but she did not notice it for some minutes. At length she turned her head to see the effect of her drawing, and at the same time caught sight of the figure of a man making his way up. She smiled to herself as the thought of its being a brigand crossed her mind; and then, as she saw it was a tall man leaning on an alpenstock, with a knapsack strapped on his back, saying to herself that it was one of the pedestrians so common in these regions, went on with her sketch. As he drew near with slow steps toiling up the ascent, she once more raised her head, when a sudden gust of wind swept round the corner of the rock by which she sat and playfully carried away her sketch. It fluttered high over the pedestrian's head, and descending in light eddies, luckily avoided the precipices in front and careered along the road behind him, some forty yards lower down. As Janet started up in despair, the traveller suddenly disengaged his knapsack, pulled his slouched hat still farther over his brows, and ran down the descent after it. Soon he was once more ascending with his capture, the glare of the mid-day sun in front of him almost preventing him from seeing the lady, while she could not distinguish his features owing to the projecting brim of his hat. As he approached, a strange thrill shot through Janet; surely that figure was familiar to her. Before she had proceeded to disentangle her ideas, embarrassed as she was by the position in which she found herself, her cavalier had taken off his hat and was holding out the sketch. Ere he had time to say a word Janet gave a start of surprise, clasped her hands, and stood speechless, a proceeding which had the effect of also rendering him silent. Dropping the unfortunate sketch (which this time floated over the declivity), the traveller stood a moment passionately contemplating her. And beautiful was the picture she presented as she stood in that blaze of sunshine, strongly relieved against the limestone-rock behind her; the amorous breeze blowing aside her light Shetland shawl and revealing her exquisite figure, while astonishment and love contended for the mastery within those violet eyes which the traveller so well remembered of old. One word explained the mystery—'Janet!' he uttered in a tone which seemed to gather up the tenderness of a quarter of a century's love, and intensify it with all the ardour of an unexpected meeting, 'Janet!'

'Mr. Dundas!' exclaimed she with a sudden pause, while her eyes opened to a larger extent than ever. Then she recovered her



self-possession. 'How delightful that you should appear just when you are wanted! What should I have done without you? Thank you so much for the sketch! By the way, where is it?' Then she laughed the old musical laugh at his discomfiture as he turned round and could see nothing of it, which was not surprising, as it was reposing on a ledge of rock some twenty fathoms down the precipice. 'There, never mind! How well you are looking! Where *have* you been since you left civilisation? Of course you have heard Hester is married?' And so she rattled on with question after question, in order to hide her confusion.

'It is very pleasant, certainly, to meet you again, and in such an unexpected situation; on a rock wall, like Andromeda of ancient fables, wringing your hands and looking wildly round for a knight to come to your assistance.'

'O dear, no! unless knights come of their own accord,' and here she pouted petulantly, 'I never take the trouble to summon them.'

'But you give them a warm welcome when they do come?'

'That depends upon who they are, and what they deserve of me,' she replied. 'But dropping *badinage*, I am really glad to see you once more. You did me a great service two years ago,' and here her voice faltered, 'a service which I can never forget, and for which I can never, my dear friend, thank you sufficiently.'

'There, Janet; it is not as if I had been a stranger that you need thank me. Say no more about all that unhappy business. I am pleased to see you looking stronger than I heard you were.'

'Ah! but I cannot be silent, and will not,' she said with a playful obstinacy, which did more than even her presence to recall past days to him. 'You acted like the truest of friends; you were prompt, persevering, and what touched me more than all, shall I tell you? so delicate, that you never returned to let me thank you for all your kindness;' and her eyes were suffused with tears.

'Come, come, Janet, this won't do. So you have really missed me, eh? What if I come now for a great favour in return for a very little service that I once did a girl whom I had loved dearly since I played with her as a boy?' and he leaned on his alpenstock and looked earnestly into her eyes.

Janet trembled as she felt what was coming, but in an instant nerved herself to meet the struggle. First, she recurred to her former manner.

'Yes,' she said lightly, 'you have just come in time to let me do you a great favour. See! will you carry my portfolio and camp-stool up the hill to luncheon? By the way, papa and mamma are there, and will be charmed to see you again.'

'Is that all you have to say to me, Janet?' he said sadly. 'Don't you know what drove me away from England for the last two years?

what now makes me long never to lose sight of you again? Need I tell you again how much I love you?

'Ah, Mr. Dundas, be silent!' and she became grave again in a moment, having found that skirmishing would not avail her, and that she must meet the attack in serious earnest. 'Do not speak of love any more to me; spare me, spare me, Harry, I entreat you! If you value the past as much as I do, do not disturb its happy memories!'

'Janet, Janet, do not look back to the past! That is gone for ever; the future is still ours: may I try to make it bright for you?'

'Never, Harry! Pardon my decision, but I have quite made up my mind. I, who treated you so badly, to—to—to marry you now! Never! Every blessing on you, but this—no, never!' and she looked him full in the face in her turn.

'Do not let pride slay love, Janet. I do not know, nay, mark me,' he said impetuously, 'I shall not ever know what *never* means!'

'Harry dear, do you remember my telling you, that day when we parted at Langton, that I would be your best friend, your well-wisher, your sister, that my affection would be yours for ever? I still feel that; nay, these sentiments rise in me stronger than ever now: be contented. Come and have some luncheon, and then go on with your travels. Forget me, and marry—I only wish you may find a girl worthy of you,' she said proudly.

'I have not far to travel, luckily, to find her;' and he took her hand. 'Janet, listen to me. I know your scruples: I respect them with all my heart, but I shall not listen to them for a moment. I will not let you wreck two lives for a punctilious shade of feeling—a girl's pride. No, I want a woman's love, a true woman's love. I offer you a man's devotion in return.'

'Harry, Harry, how can I?' and she hid her face in her hands; 'spare me, I entreat you!'

'Ah, joy of joys!' he exclaimed, 'then you love me, I see! You have not succeeded, like the captured Indian, in steeling your heart to everything that can torture you. Speak, darling,' and he put his arm round her, supporting her in her internal agony; 'why ruin two lives, Janet? See here. When you were at Perugia, did you think of the youth who had carried away his lady's bracelet years before, hoping one day to be able to restore it, and there in the cathedral, turning round during his devotions, found her kneeling at his side? Look here! look at my talisman, which has gone with me and cheered me these long dismal two years!' and he drew from his bosom a glossy tress of flaxen hair, the one Janet had given him when they parted so passionately at Langton wood; 'now can you refuse me any longer? You will find that it matches this, love!' and he smoothed once more the delicate blonde hair that escaped from Janet's hat.

She rested a moment—one moment only—silent in his embrace, and then murmured, vanquished by his force of will, and with her own heart rising in rebellion against her, ‘Well, Harry, if it must be—if you will take this wreck, this ruin, that you speak of—I—I—I will love you till death as I do at present!’ and she hid her face on his breast.

\* \* \* \* \*

‘There, there, Harry! mind your proprieties! What a place for lovemaking is this! Why, all Monaco can see us, to say nothing of people up and down the road;’ and she looked round hurriedly. ‘Luckily there is no one, but it is more than you deserve!’

‘Corpo di Bacco! I am so glad, I don’t care who sees my joy! As it is, however, only a thousand ages look down on us from those grand peaks above.’

‘What *will* papa say! We must have kept luncheon waiting the best part of half an hour. Give me your arm, sir, at once, and do behave like a sane being now we are going amongst them all.’

I am not going to describe that supremely happy picnic, where the engaged pair looked down from a heaven of their own upon the world of troubles which lay sleeping in sunshine below them. The mountain peaks which rose above, each higher than its neighbour, seemed only the successively higher steps of happiness that lay in front of them. Love, youth, beauty, competence of worldly wealth, two equal hearts, what more can life’s romance require?

The servants discreetly withdrew to the carriage on the lovers’ approach. Mr. Marshall flung his ‘Murray’ high up in the air, and his hat after it, and rushed to seize Dundas’s hand.

‘My dear fellow, I see how it is! Young people must have their own way, eh? God bless you both!’ And he rubbed his hands over his eyes. ‘Now, come along to lunch.—Barker, open a bottle of the *veuve clicquot* at once.’

Mrs. Marshall went up to Janet and kissed her, her heart full to overflowing. ‘My own darling!’ was all she could utter. Then she turned and silently shook Dundas’s hand. He knew the fulness of joy which that expressed, the confidence with which it intimated that she intrusted her daughter to his care.

Speedily the happy party returned to England, and before long Langton Hall was once more astir with preparations for a wedding. ‘Well,’ said Bell to his satellite as they were opening the cucumber frames, ‘I allus said as how Miss Janet and young Mr. Dundas would get married at last. Marriages is much like gardening hopperations. When one cuts-off a shoot here and stops a leaf there, and prunes a side-branch and takes off a promising lead, one learns that all need not allus go straight with leddies and gentlemen in their love concerns; and p’raps,’ he continued in that moralising strain so dear to gardeners, sextons, and the like, who have to do

with Mother Earth, 'p'raps it is as well for them that it should be so, else they would never know what trouble was.'

Who cannot fancy the wedding? How half the county came to Langton for the occasion, and beheld Janet serenely happy, a very queen of beauty, in white satin and Honiton lace; how bonfires were lit and cannons fired, and a fountain flowed with negus in the great hall?

'So these were wed, and merrily rang the bells;  
Merrily rang the bells, and they were wed.'

And other bright eyes and honest young hearts drew nearer to each other, unconsciously rehearsing the first scenes in that great drama of human life which shall go on, marked by marrying and giving in marriage, for ever. Laughable, I remember, were the incidents connected with returning after the dance. A long shed was set apart for servants 'overtaken' by the potent liquors of the servants' hall, and this was so well occupied by somnolent coachmen, that many masters had to drive themselves home. Spite of coloured lamps, others were driven into the Park, and wandered, like Dante's condemned souls, lost among the trees till morning. Not a few were run into the lake; and one party I heard of whose coachman solemnly took them round it again and again, trying to find the way he had come there.

As for Dundas, one circumstance only marred the felicity of his honeymoon. From Weymouth he rode over to Portland one morning (luckily, by himself), and passing a party of convicts labouring on the fortifications, saw a face fixed on him in which was expressed an intensity of hate, malignity, and impotent revenge awful to witness. He had but one look as he passed, yet that unmistakably revealed the features of his quondam rival Captain Gibbs.

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## SERIOUS ODDITIES

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A FRIEND, recently home from Ceylon, told me the other day of a peculiar form of worship they have there, and of the odd way in which it is carried out. 'A good many of the natives,' he said, 'worship the devil; service every Tuesday evening. One evening I went—as a spectator, of course. The devotees of his Sublimity assemble in a prominence overlooking a deep gorge in the cliff by the sea. Half-way below, on the other side of the gorge, is a cavern, the supposed residence of the object of worship. Those attending the service bring offerings and deliver them to their priest, who goes through a ceremony with loud invocations and a great deal in the way of genuflection; and as the climax he throws a cocoa-nut at the entrance of the cave. A great bell is then set ringing, the worshippers fall prostrate, and so remain until the ringer is exhausted, when they rise and retire.' A singular illustration this of the humorous side sometimes belonging to the serious; of the way in which even that held to be sacred sometimes gets mixed-up with the ludicrous,—the idea of Tuesday-evening meetings to pelt the devil with cocoa-nuts being, no doubt, a solemn idea in the minds of the worshippers, but rather calculated to amuse the rest of the world.

And thinking over this incident, I have been reminded of other instances, some nearer home, in which the serious, not to say the devotional, feeling has found expression in odd ways (the oddity for the most part wholly unperceived by those most interested); and some of these I have been tempted to group together here, simply as curiosities of devotion. Among them let me note, first, a singular sentence which once formed part of the daily prayer in use among the Jews. After other expressions of gratitude, the Jew was wont to exclaim, 'Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, that thou hast not made me a woman!' Seeing the dignity Christianity has conferred on the female sex, this line is alone sufficient to indicate the radical difference between it and the Jewish system. It should be mentioned, to the credit of the modern sons of Israel, that this ungallant sentence is now expunged from their form of prayer. *Apropos* of set forms, I have more than once heard churchmen claim inspiration for the Book of Common Prayer as well as the Bible. It has certainly remarkable beauties; and it is hardly surprising to find it widely adopted, at least in parts, by many without the pale of the Church of England. Few, indeed, really object to it; but it



is easy to understand that earnest and excitable minds of a certain stamp find all set forms, all prescribed bounds and limits, intolerable to them, in their desire to 'wrestle in prayer,' as they express it, and to give fervid expression to the devotional impulses of the moment. On the other hand, it is possible to conceive of an opposite state of mind in which the terms of set compositions are too explicit—too compromising, if the term may be allowed. An extreme example of this is afforded in the well-known case of the soldier praying in battle. Feeling that a time of peril should also be a time of prayer, he was yet indisposed to permit himself to be compromised by his devotional promptings. Therefore he shaped his supplication in this politic form: 'O God—if there is a God; save my soul—if I have a soul!' Anything less compromising it is impossible to conceive.

The danger of extempore prayer is, that it may degenerate into the ludicrous. Take, for example, the case of the elder who was invited to pray on the day after a battle, and who said, 'O Lord, I never see such a day as it was yesterday, and I don't believe you ever did!' Or take the case of the minister giving praise at harvest-time. 'We thank thee, O Lord, for thy great bounty,' said he; 'we thank thee for the fine weather; we thank thee for the bountiful harvest, and that thou hast enabled us to gather in the wheat throughout all this district,—with the exception of Farmer Mills's little three-cornered patch down in the hollow, *not worth mentioning.*' Dean Ramsay—if I remember rightly—tells a yet better story of the same kind. A Highland minister, having been requested by his flock to pray for better weather, and being at the same time warned to be cautious in presenting his petition, because, the last time he had prayed for better weather, it had become worse, thus expressed himself: 'An' noo, Lord, I hae a petition to present, but I maun be unco wary o' the wordin' o't. Ye ken, Lord, the kittle state the craps are in. Just send us a souglin', southern, dreein' breeze as'll save the strae, and winna harm the heed; for if ye send a tearin', reevin', thunderin' storm, as ye did the last time I prayed for gude weather, ye'll play the very mischief wi' the aits, and fairly spoil a'.'

A singular example of the effect of devotional habits over an ignorant mind was recorded in the newspapers some years ago. A domestic servant at Canterbury was charged with stealing five pounds from her master's till. This sum was missed immediately after she had made off from her master's house; and when taken into custody a piece of paper was found in her possession, on which she had recently written a prayer suited to her circumstances. Here is a copy of the strange document: 'O Lord, I pray thee look down on me, one who now is bowed down with grief; in pity, Lord, send me all things that I may require. Heal, I pray you, the broken-hearted woman. Things that I require: 1 sack of flour, 1 score of

salt-pork,  $\frac{1}{2}$  ditto salt-beef, 6 pounds of sugar, 1 ditto tea, 1 ditto butter, 6 ditto cheese, 4 ditto candles,  $\frac{1}{2}$  ditto coffee, 2 sacks of potatoes, 1 ton of coals, 1 hundred of wood, and 2 sovereigns to pay Mrs. Vinall for her kindness.' Mrs. Vinall was the woman to whose house she had gone when running away from her situation. I may add, that this pious young person, who apparently made sure of a favourable answer to her petition by helping herself to the means of purchasing what she needed, escaped scot-free, because it could not be shown that the money she was known to have expended on herself, after running away, was actually the same money her master had lost.

In nothing, perhaps, is the humorous side of the religious feeling exhibited more strongly than in the cathedrals and other religious structures of past ages. That the builders of these were influenced by a great deal of earnest sincerity admits of little question. Yet what quaint details their works present, what comicalities in stone, what absolute obscenities even in connection with all that is most sacred! What prompted these eccentricities? Not irreligion certainly; probably mere grossness, or the absence of that culture which in these days draws a hard and fast line between the fanciful and the licentious, between the legitimately artistic and the offensively suggestive. But in truth we are little able to realise the Middle-Age religious life. It was something quite distinct from anything of which we have experience. It is hard even to understand the spirit animating men of later days; of Wilde the poet, for example, vicar of Aylmoe, and one of the ejected ministers of 1662, who is remembered for doing a good thing in an incredibly bad manner. He left six Bibles to one of the churches of his native town, St. Ives; for which twelve persons, six male and six female, were to throw dice in church on Whit-Tuesday, while the minister knelt and prayed God to 'direct the lots to his glory!' That is surely one of the most remarkable prayers on record.

In connection with eccentricities of devotion it is impossible to avoid glancing at the United States, the hotbed of unregulated religious enthusiasm. Mr. Gough gives a good example of the spirit in which prayer is often conducted there—as, indeed, in our own country. A minister presiding at one of his lectures opened the proceedings with a long extempore outburst, after which he proceeded to say, 'Ladies and gentlemen, *as I have informed you in my prayer*, the temperance cause is in a healthy state.' Somewhere I have met with a story of a revival-meeting which is not without point. One of the exhorters at the meeting was jealous of a brother who excelled in singing and prayer, and, having borne it as long as he could, at last expressed himself in these terms: 'Ah, well, he may sing and pray; but by the blessing of God there's one thing I can beat him in—I can fiddle his shirt off!' But religious eccen-

tricity finds its strongest development among the negroes. Mr. Macrae, who recently visited America, gives some striking particulars of what is called 'getting religion,' that is, being converted, on the part of the negroes. 'Conversion with them is a thunder-peal, followed by a deluge of the spirit, and a bursting forth of the sun, clearing the day, and filling the world with gladness. Sometimes for a whole week before a negro gets religion he goes about in a state of great depression, much excited in mind about his sins and his lost condition. Then suddenly, perhaps when mournfully waiting at table, or going a message, or grooming the horses, he raises a shout of joy, and runs about shaking hands with everybody, and saying, "I've got religion! Bress de Lord! I'm out of de pit! Bress de Lord! Hallelujah!" And all the servants will run about informing one another that "Dick's got religion." It is in conducting religious services that the negro shines. One man prayed, 'Lord, when we'se done chawin' all de hard bones, and swallerin' all de bitter pills, take us home to thyself.' Another, who was anxious that his flock might be less indifferent, said: 'Lord, stir dese yere sinners up right smart, and don't be as merciful as you generally is.' During the war a negro preacher prayed for his enemies in this wise: 'Bress, we do pray thee, our enemies, de wicked Sessech. Gib them time to 'pent, we do pray thee; and then we will excuse thee if thou takes dem all to glory.' But the most amusing example of negro devotion I have left to the last. The negroes are exceedingly fond of long words, about the meaning of which they are often far from clear; though obviously they are earnest enough in the use of them in the sense *they* mean; that is, as expressing some idea of their own. A signal instance of this was afforded by a man who was in the habit of using in his prayers the tremendous word 'disarumgumtigated;' the origin or significance of which no one was ever able to discover. He prayed 'that their good pastor might be disarumgumtigated;' and that 'de white teachers who had come from so far to construct de poor coloured folks might be disarumgumtigated;' the expression being used with as much apparent satisfaction as that derived by the traditional old lady from 'that blessed word Mesopotamia.' It would be difficult to go beyond this serious oddity.

WILLIAM SAWYER.

## NO CROSS NO CROWN

Non sine cruce corona

---

No Cross no Crown ! *He* is not slave but master  
Of the dark destinies that Fate accords,  
Who readeth clear through every rude disaster  
These star-writ words,  
Gleaming aloft in Heaven's calm empyréan,  
Unclouded still, however tempests frown,  
Bright as the cynosure o'er seas Judean—  
*No Cross no Crown !*

No Cross no Crown ! What need we reckon, though perish  
The flowers of hope that life's bleak desert deck ?  
Though fleet like phantoms all the joys we cherish  
What need we reckon ?  
Through storms we travel to where peace resideth,  
Through vile dishonours to sublime renown,  
Through countless griefs to where no grief abideth—  
*No Cross no Crown !*

No Cross no Crown ! O, who would now surrender  
This priceless heritage, this matchless fate,  
For idle pomp and unenduring splendour  
Of earthly state ?  
When roll the thunders, and the lightning flameth,  
Hark to the Seraph's voice ! Be not cast down !  
The Angel standing in the sun\* exclaimeth,  
*No Cross no Crown !*

CHARLES J. DUNPHIE, A.B.

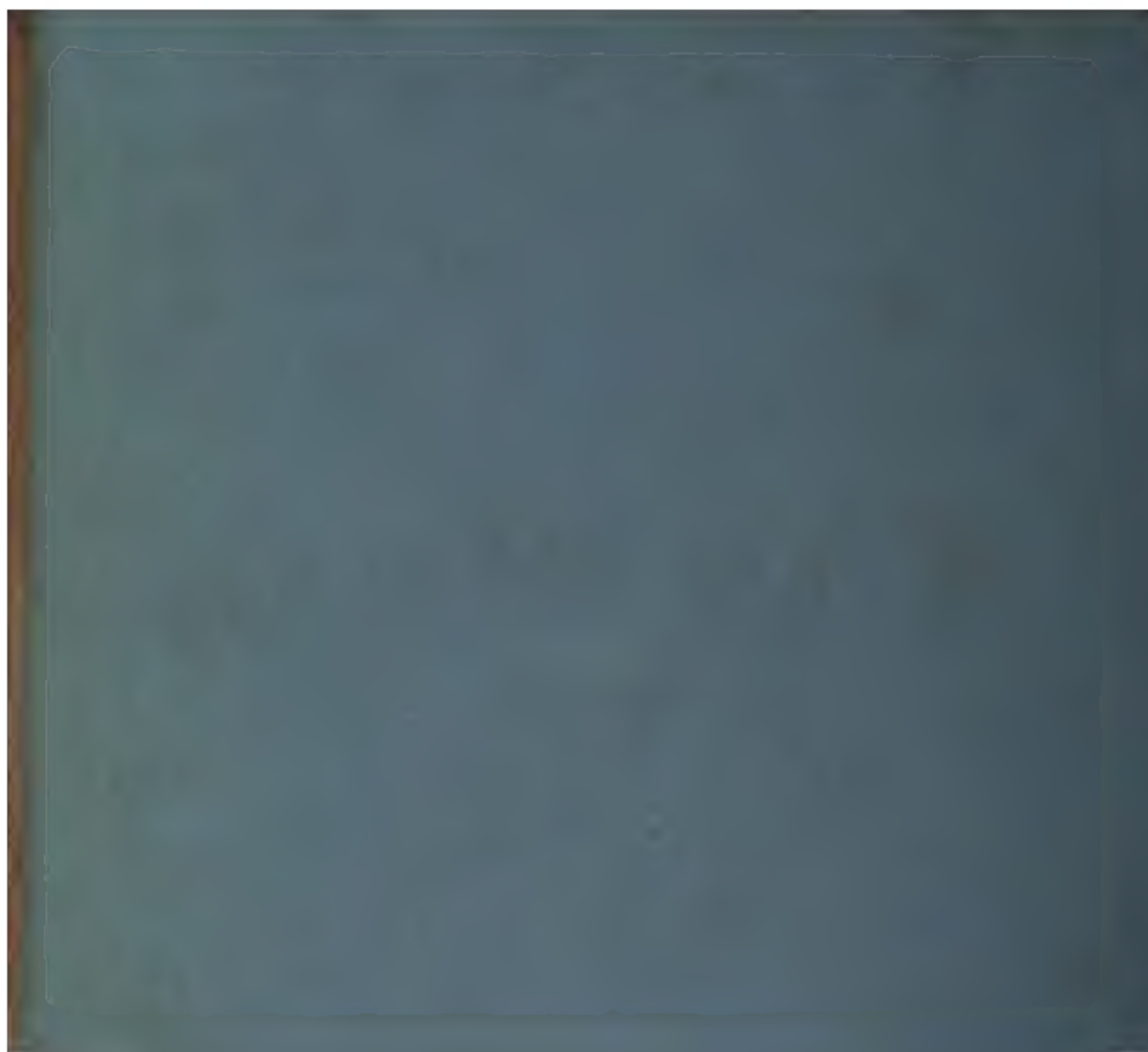
\* ' I saw an Angel standing in the sun.' Rev. xix. 17.











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